

Nantwich

Nantwich Chronicle

BRAHMS and Beethoven feature in the Nantwich Choral Society's concert in St. Mary's Church, on Saturday, March 26.

The singers, conducted by Stephan Buckman, will team up with the Nantwich Sinfonia led by David Routledge. Brahms' German Requiem has nothing in common with the Latin mass for the dead. Although deeply religious, he was not an orthodox follower of any religion. For his Requiem he chose passages from the Lutheran Bible which emphasize comfort for the bereaved rather than for the departed. The large-scale work for choir and orchestra will begin at 7.30pm.

The second half of the programme will provide a contrast, with the Sinfonia dashing off Beethoven's bright and breezy Symphony No 4 with its finale that has been described as an

example of the composer's "unbuttoned" sense of humour.

Tickets, price £7 (concessions £5), are available from Society members, at the door, or by phoning 625641.

NANTWICH CHORAL SOCIETY. With Nantwich Sinfonia present Brahms (A German Requiem) and Beethoven (Symphony No 4 in B Flat) on Saturday, March 26, 7.30pm at The Parish Church of St Mary, Nantwich. Tickets £7, OAPs and students £5, available from society mem-

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EVENING SENTINEL, Monday, March 14, 1994

Prime

Yan Pacal Tortelier — who must be getting used to the Victoria Hall's acoustics by now — has the baton on Wednesday week, and the Mediterranean theme will again be featured on in another item on the programme — Respighi's Fountains of Rome.

But to bring you down to earth there's a dose of Brahms, his

Classical Notes

with
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Second Symphony. To be sure this is the most listener-friendly of Brahms' four symphonies, and it might prime you for the Nantwich Choral Society performance of A

German Requiem in St Mary's Church the following Saturday.

Incidentally, it's good news that Stoke and Newcastle Music organisers already have three Museum Theatre piano recitals planned for next season — Leon McCawley on October 20, Piotr Anderszewski on December 1, and Kathryn Stott on March 16, 1995.

Return

In addition there will be a two-piano, piano duet and piano solo concert by Rostal and Schaefer at the Victoria Hall on November 18, and negotiations are in progress to being a return visit by the youthful Frederick Kempf, whose playing at the Museum Theatre in

Presenting Beethoven at his most unbuttoned

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Scaling musical peaks

NANTWICH Choral Society certainly scales the musical peaks to mark its 21st anniversary.

Imagine - Beethoven's Fourth Symphony and Brahms's German Requiem on the same programme. Yet that's how it was at St Mary's Church on Saturday night.

Unusual, no doubt, but in Stephen Buckman the Nantwich society has a conductor who was surely cut out to interpret German composers. His discipline is strict, he has an unswerving line, and his sense of rhythmic dynamics never fails to thrill.

All these qualities were evident in the Beethoven symphony. The Nantwich Sinfonia played out of their skins and the result was a performance that gave immense pleasure and many a touch of joy.

There was much to savour, too, in A German Requiem, though here some of the choristers got out of their depth and a sharp focus was occasionally lacking - especially amid the drama of "All flesh doth perish".

But, helped by the church acoustics, "How lovely are thy dwellings" sounded angelic. And both soloists - soprano Catrin Ley and baritone Philip Ravenscroft - were as warm and engaging as ever.

Now for Everest. Buckman and his band tackle Bach's B minor Mass on June 18.

most unbuttoned

BRAHMS'S greatest choral work — and the fulcrum of his music — can be heard at St Mary's Church, Nantwich, on Saturday (7.30pm).

A German Requiem is an ambitious choice by Nantwich Choral Society, but, spurred on by enterprising conductor Stephen Buckman, these South Cheshire choristers have always been ready to accept a challenge.

Non-denominational and focusing on faith in the Resurrection rather than terror at the Day of Judgment, A German Requiem isn't really in the line of the 19th Century tradition at all, as elsewhere, Brahms's roots lie in the harmony of Handel.

There are seven sections (as against the Roman Catholic practice of five); the first, second, fourth and last are purely choral, the third and sixth for solo baritone and the fifth for soprano.

The soprano role, to be sung by Catrin Ley at Nantwich, is justly famous, and Philip Ravenscroft's dark vocal timbre should be ideally suited to the baritone part.

The orchestra is the Nantwich Sinfonia, led by David Routledge, and they make up an evening of mighty German music by performing Beethoven's Fourth Symphony to complement the Brahms.

This is Beethoven at his most unbuttoned — lively, cheerful and brimming with lyrical zest. You

would travel a long way to find a more seriously interesting programme than this contribution to Nantwich Choral Society's 21st anniversary celebrations.

REVIEWS By Eric Snape

EVENING SENTINEL, Monday, March 28, 1994