

# Cathedral Concert Society

Recitals & chamber concerts in Ripon  
2016–17 season

Sacconi String Quartet  
with Robert Plane *clarinet*



Monday 10 October 2016, 7.30pm | Ripon Cathedral

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

## Welcome

### A warm welcome to the first concert of the 2016–17 season.

One of the hallmarks of the Cathedral Concert Society over the years has been to introduce our audience to rarely-heard music. Tonight is no exception when we have the opportunity to hear York Bowen's clarinet quintet. An important and significant composer of the early twentieth century, York Bowen is now forgotten and his music seldom performed.

Another hallmark is the carefully chosen mix of performers – well established musicians well known to our audience, and young artists we think will be the ones to watch in the future. The Sacconi Quartet and Robert Plane who make a welcome return to Ripon tonight are well established and very well known. Many will recall Fenella Humphreys' thrilling "Traditions from the East" concert in January 2014. She returns in November to explore the string trio repertoire.

By contrast later in the season we are introducing four "acts" new to the society: Harry the Piano, a virtuoso pianist with an eclectic mix of pieces of all genres and styles; the tenor Nick Pritchard, with pianist Ian Tindale, who will perform the first in a planned series of performances of Schubert's three great song cycles (watch this space); the exciting Magnard Wind Ensemble and finally Anna Tsybuleva, winner of last year's Leeds International Piano Competition (tickets for this concert are already selling fast).

As usual I would like you to encourage your friends to enjoy this feast of music, by joining the Society as members (NB pro rata reduced rate for the rest of the season), by using the £10 guest tickets (two per member per concert) or by attending individual concerts.

In addition we are hoping to establish a group of local ambassadors to help with publicity and spread the word about the Society and its concerts. If you would be interested in doing this please let me know.

Roger Higson, Chairman

### STOP PRESS

As mentioned elsewhere in the programme, The Sacconi Quartet have recently recorded the Beethoven Op. 132 Quartet. Many in the audience will have heard their memorable performance of this work two years ago. Tim Robinson said in his review, *"I hesitate to describe the third movement. Words just will not do. Go and listen to it. Buy the Sacconi's recording which they are about to make."*

The recording has just been released to critical acclaim: *"The playing is fresh and pliable, each work illuminating the other. String quartets stand out for different reasons, from quality of sound... to adventurous repertoire... to versatility, among whom the Sacconi Quartet... are front-runners."* Fiona Maddocks (Observer \*\*\*\*\*)

*"Refreshing, committed performances... these young players relish the drama herein."* He singles out the Op. 132 recording, describing it as *"...earthy and bold, although the slow movement is rapt and totally unsentimental. It is a new recording and sounds marvellous..."*

Guy Weatherall (Classical Music Magazine \*\*\*\*\*)

You will be able to buy the CD at this concert!

# Cathedral Concert Society

Patron: Julius Drake

Monday 10 October 2016

Sacconi String Quartet | Robert Plane *clarinet*

### PROGRAMME

**Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart**  
(1756–1791)

**String Quartet No. 20 in D, K.499 'Hofmeister'**

*Allegretto*  
*Menuetto: allegretto*  
*Adagio*  
*Molto allegro*

**York Bowen**  
(1884–1961)

**Phantasy Quintet for Bass Clarinet and Strings Op. 90**

*Interval - during the interval refreshments will be served in the south transept.*

**Johannes Brahms**  
(1833–1897)

**Quintet for Clarinet and Strings in B minor Op. 115**

*Allegro*  
*Adagio*  
*Andantino*  
*Con moto*



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**Mozart: String Quartet No. 20 in D, K.499 ‘Hofmeister’**

We do not know why Mozart, with many weighty compositions on the stocks, came to write this single quartet, no. 499 in Köchel’s catalogue and dated Vienna, 19 August 1786. It is among the composer’s last series of quartets: normally such publications were in sets of three or six and bore a dedication. K.499 had no dedicatee and was published on its own in the same year by the publisher Hofmeister (hence its sobriquet).

The first theme, delivered in unison, permeates the rest of the first movement to a quite remarkable degree – not only its graceful initial shape, but its repeated crotchets. They turn up as appendages of several secondary subjects, and from almost exclusively the subject matter of the development section. The elegance of the frequent patches of counterpoint is a matter of wonder. The minuet is greatly enriched by the rather high viola part, and again by little bursts of imitation. The trio energetically carries on the counterpoint and eschews the usual “light-relief” for the minor key. On the other hand the *adagio* luxuriates in melody and varieties of scoring, and notwithstanding its slow tempo has a middle passage amounting to more than the simple lead-back often found in Mozart’s slow movements. It even has a slightly enigmatic tailpiece after the first violin’s sign-off trill.

The high spirits of the last movement are marked by the sudden silences and by Mozart’s afterthought in adding *molto* to the speed indication. It is worth noting what happens after the first pause. A different subject is heard, still in the home key, like a second first subject, so to speak. In a similar burst of permeation to the first movement’s, both these subjects appear in the design all over the place, making a scheme of great vivacity, even for Mozart, and spilling on into a tailpiece marked by characteristic silences.

*Programme note provided by Ivor Keys , March 2011*



**York Bowen: Phantasy Quintet for Bass Clarinet and Strings Op. 90**

**The clarinet** in one form or another has been around since the start of the 18th century but only became a regular visitor to the classical orchestra in the 19th century when its expressive capabilities and its easy blend with other instruments were recognised and welcomed. The earliest instruments, like all other wind instruments, were essentially recorders with a reed of some kind to start the sound. The pitch was changed by opening or closing finger holes on the body of the instrument with very occasionally a single key to operate a hard-to-reach finger hole. Only with the invention of sophisticated key systems did the full potential of the instrument become available: all holes are now managed by a key, the range of the instruments has extended and, which is more important, the instruments have become manageable and by and large can play in tune. *(See the illustration for the contortions required for the maker to bring all the finger holes into the player’s reach on an early bass-clarinet.)*

The clarinet is a single reed instrument, one piece of reed being held in its wide mouthpiece (contrast an oboe or bassoon where two pieces of reed are held in a narrow mouthpiece): like the other orchestral instruments they belonged to families (for instance flute, alto flute, bass flute, piccolo) in which some of the members have less work than the others. So with the clarinet family. Most of the work goes to the clarinet in B flat or to its slightly larger brother, the clarinet in A. There is a higher, shriller clarinet in E flat (Richard Strauss), a larger, deeper basset-clarinet (Mozart), the true basset-horn (Mozart and the freemasons), and the wonderfully sonorous loud bathroom-sounding bass clarinet. (There is also for completeness a double-bass clarinet which appears to have been designed by Gerard Hoffnung.)

**The modern bass clarinet** is more than a metre tall, with keys of nearly half a metre long. The barrel is an S-bent metal piece, and the bell is bent up and forward like a saxophone’s. The instrument is much too



heavy to be held when being played and either rests, like a double bass, on its “thorn” or spike, or in a special harness. The bass clarinet’s tonal range is wider than that of any other wind instrument – it can play as low as a bassoon and as high as a “normal” soprano clarinet. Its dynamic range is even wider than that of a normal soprano clarinet. A bass clarinet easily can start playing a phrase in an almost inaudible *ppp* crescendoing up to the loudest *fff* and back. It is to be found in concert bands and very large orchestras but less often as a soloist or chamber musician.

Described by Saint-Saëns as ‘the most remarkable of the young British composers’, (Edwin) **York Bowen** (1884–1961) was widely known as a pianist and as a composer, his fame reaching its zenith in the years immediately preceding the First World War. The writer and composer Thomas Dunhill described Bowen’s chamber music as ‘an essentially healthy and breezy phase in modern art’. This description aptly applies to his string quartets. The atmospheric *Phantasy Quintet* provides a rare opportunity to hear the beauty of the bass clarinet in a truly eloquent and expressive soloist capacity. Composed in a single movement the Quintet is a fascinating work for the virtually unique combination of bass clarinet and string quartet. Flowing seamlessly, the music masterfully integrates the bass clarinet into the texture. This is very much a Cobbett-style fantasy (or phantasie), a continuous arch of nearly a quarter-hour duration encompassing a variety of tempi and moods. It was probably written in 1932 and is thus a relatively late work. Rob Barnet of the British Music Society has written perceptively, “This is a haunting little work evoking kindly ghosts and mellifluous elegies. The hushed shivering start echoes the Fenlands’ mystery of Bowen’s Horn Quintet of five years previously: [later] the music displays ardour and determination adorably underpinned by the deep Mozartian serenading of the bass clarinet. The last several minutes seem to be a regretful farewell whether by Bowen or to someone else I do not know but the impression is very strong.”



John Talbot, to whom the musical public has to be grateful for his exploration of and passion for the forgotten British composers of the early 20th century, has written of this quintet:

“Little is known of its history: it would be fascinating to know why Bowen chose to write for this beautiful instrument, almost completely neglected in its full-scale solo capacity. (Was Jonathan Frank correct in declaring as he did in *Musical Opinion* in July 1957, that ‘this is surely the only work for solo bass clarinet in existence’?) [By the 1990s] the work was still unpublished, and there had been only two known performances, the more recent given by students of the Royal Academy at a lunchtime concert on 22 February 1984, the centenary of the composer’s birth. The work clearly derives in structure from the Cobbett Phantasy Competitions which were initiated in 1905 to further the cause of British chamber music, and is in the usual one-movement form which in range attempts to encompass that of a full three- or four-movement sonata. Thus the first section, corresponding perhaps to the first movement of a sonata, presents two themes in a ternary arrangement; the middle section, which is introduced by a quasi-recitative passage for bass clarinet and followed by a linking passage featuring a lovingly crafted viola solo, corresponds to a second movement; and the third, a brilliantly driven *Allegro con spirito*, represents a finale. The whole piece, constructed with seamless skill, is rounded off with a sustained *tranquillo* coda which returns to the mood of nocturnal reverie of the opening bars.”

For a literary discussion of other extremely low wind instruments, in this case the Dobbophone, the reader is respectfully directed towards “*Low Notes on a High Level*” by J. B. Priestley (normally available on Amazon for 75p plus p & p).

*Programme note by D Albert Tiefland*



## Brahms: Quintet for Clarinet and Strings in B minor Op. 115

Brahms took on a fresh lease of life on encountering the clarinetist Richard Mühlfeld at Mannheim where he was principal clarinetist. He was inspired to write the Clarinet Trio Op. 114, two sonatas and this quintet. Many people regard this gracious **clarinet quintet** as the composer's most beautifully conceived small-scale work, though surely small-scaled only in its limited scoring, for it produces and develops its own sinewy strength and power.

The first movement is in sonata form and is somewhat sombre in mood. After four bars of string introduction the principal subject is stated by the clarinet – a theme of considerable loveliness which ranges through three octaves, and one which haunts the entire work and which, in fact, forms the coda to the last movement. After a rhythmic “bridge” passage the clarinet announces the second subject, this time harnessed to the second violin. The development is often impassioned with the wind instrument sometimes soaring above the strings, sometimes offering the dark rich colour of its lower register, but always a warm voice in the general texture. The coda, poignant and heart touching, offers a restatement of the introductory bars.

The *Adagio* finds the strings muted throughout, allowing the clarinet to spin its magic over a veiled, moonlit landscape. The middle section allows the clarinet to indulge in a wild rhapsody over a tremolo accompaniment and gives it a melody, elegiac and tender, and decorated with impish arabesques. Serenity returns and the coda allows the movement to die away calmly and with resignation.

The third movement is a pensive *intermezzo*, bringing relaxation after the intensity of the two previous movements. It is cast in two contrasted sections. After the opening limpid phrases (D major) the tempo suddenly quickens into a lively, but delicate *scherzo*, in B minor and 2/4 time. The opening *andantino* never returns, although the coda brings us back into D major with a restatement of its chief theme. It is a very delicately poised movement and full of subtle detail. The final movement is a set of five variations on a binary theme, the second half of which is repeated. One is struck again by the perfect craftsmanship, by the sensuous beauty of the scoring and by the imaginative treatment. The variations range over a wide canvas, as indeed does the whole work, and reveal a variety of moods with many striking effects. The coda induces a mood of resignation as the principal theme of the first movement creeps into the texture in what is a finely calculated finish to a work of infinite tenderness and nostalgia.

*The programme note by Professor Keyes and the notes to the Brahms quintet compiled from material kindly provided by Making Music from its notes library.*



## Sacconi String Quartet

Ben Hancox *violin*  
Hannah Dawson *violin*  
Robin Ashwell *viola*  
Cara Berridge *cello*

The award-winning Sacconi Quartet is recognised for its unanimous and compelling ensemble, consistently communicating with a fresh and imaginative approach. The Quartet was formed in 2001, and its four founder members continue to demonstrate a shared passion for string quartet repertoire, infectiousy reaching out to audiences with their energy and enthusiasm. The Sacconi is Quartet in Association at the Royal College of Music and Associate Artist at the Bristol Old Vic.

The 2015–16 season saw the Quartet focusing on the works of Jonathan Dove, Graham Fitkin and John McCabe, culminating in CD recordings of all three composers. Their commission with Mark Padmore of Jonathan Dove's new song cycle *In Damascus*, with words by Syrian poet Ali Safar, was premiered in Folkestone, Aldeburgh and London. Other highlights of last season included return performances at William Walton's house in Ischia, Italy, and collaborations with Freddy Kempf, Charles Owen, Roger Chase, Pierre Doumenge, Miloš Karadaglić, Tim Boulton, Simon Rowland-Jones, Garfield Jackson and David Waterman. They also recorded John McCabe's Horn Quintet, written for them and David Pyatt in 2011.

In summer 2015 the Quartet launched HEARTFELT, their most innovative project to date. A radical reinterpretation of Beethoven's iconic String Quartet in A minor opus 132, HEARTFELT pushed the boundaries of chamber music through combining sound, light and touch, for a truly unique performance in which audience members connected with each performer's heartbeat through holding robotic 'hearts'. [www.heartfelt.org.uk](http://www.heartfelt.org.uk)

Now in its tenth year, the Sacconi Chamber Music Festival in Folkestone, Kent, is an established event in the cultural calendar and is expanding year on year with challenging programming and exciting collaborations. The Quartet's recording of Beethoven Op. 132 and Mendelssohn Op. 13, the first commercial pairing of these closely related works, will shortly be released on Sacconi Records. The previous release, a disc of Czech quartets, was received with widespread critical acclaim, broadcast on BBC Radio 3 and tipped as a classical chart 'Hot Shot' by Classic FM.

The name Sacconi Quartet comes from the outstanding twentieth-century Italian luthier and restorer Simone Sacconi, whose book *The Secrets of Stradivari* is considered an indispensable reference for violin makers. Robin is indebted to Ellen Solomon for the use of his viola. Ben, Hannah & Cara have all been generously loaned their instruments by the Royal Society of Musicians, a charity which helps musicians in need, for which they are extremely grateful.





## Robert Plane *clarinet*

Robert Plane won the Royal OverSeas League Music Competition in 1992. Since then his solo and chamber career has taken him to prestigious venues across Europe and beyond, performing Mozart's Clarinet Concerto in Madrid's Auditorio Nacional de Música with the City of London Sinfonia, on tour in the USA with the Virginia Symphony and throughout China with the BBC National Orchestra of Wales, during which his performance at Beijing's National Centre for the Performing Arts was broadcast live to a TV audience of 6 million.

Robert has become particularly known for his performances and recordings of the magnificent English repertoire for clarinet. *Gramophone* magazine has praised playing of 'ravishing lyricism and conviction by Robert Plane, who has now surely fully occupied the shoes of the late Thea King in his championship of British clarinet music.' His benchmark recording of Finzi's Clarinet Concerto (BBC Radio 3 Building a Library recommendation and part of the Naxos British Music Series which won a Gramophone Award in 1999) is still a regular feature of the playlists of both Radio 3 and Classic FM nearly twenty years after its initial release. He subsequently recorded discs of music by Bax (a further Gramophone Award shortlisting), John Ireland, Howells, Alwyn, Holbrooke, Robin Milford and Stanford, including Stanford's Clarinet Concerto with the Bournemouth Symphony Orchestra.

Robert made his solo debut at the BBC Proms in 2011 in Simon Holt's double concerto *Centauromachy*. He gave the world premiere of Piers Hellawell's *Agricolas*, with subsequent performances and a CD recording for Delphian with the Ulster Orchestra and the RTÉ National Symphony Orchestra. Other notable premieres include the clarinet concerto by Diana Burrell, with performances with Royal Northern Sinfonia at the Huddersfield Contemporary Festival and at the Barbican, and Nicola LeFanu's *Concertino*. He gave the UK premiere of Christian Jost's *Heart of Darkness* before taking it the Dortmund Philharmonic during its season celebrating that composer's works. Other overseas engagements include Copland with the Malta Philharmonic in Valletta and a gala performance of the Bruch Double Concerto for clarinet and viola with the Symphony Orchestra of Sri Lanka as part of the Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting in 2013.

Robert has formed close partnerships with a number of leading chamber ensembles. He has performed and recorded with the Gould Piano Trio for over twenty years and their recording of Messiaen's *Quartet for the End of Time* was hailed by *Gramophone* as the 'finest modern version' of this monumental work. He also appears on the Gould Trio's recorded cycle of the complete trios of both Beethoven and Brahms. Together they direct the Corbridge Chamber Music Festival in Northumberland. He has collaborated with the Maggini, Dante, Auer, Carducci, Cavalleri, Brodsky and Tippett Quartets, and his performance of the Brahms Clarinet Quintet with the Škampa Quartet was broadcast live on Radio 3 on the opening night of that station's 'Brahms Experience'. Robert has given concerts with the Mandelring Quartet in Germany,



Jake Morley

the UK and on a West Coast USA tour and a series of recitals in Switzerland with the Swiss Piano Trio. He has performed with pianist Sophia Rahman since meeting as students at the Royal Academy of Music, for music clubs and festivals throughout the UK and on tour in South America, China, New Zealand and Sri Lanka.

Alongside his solo and chamber work Robert has held the position of principal clarinet with Royal Northern Sinfonia, the City of Birmingham Symphony Orchestra and BBC National Orchestra of Wales. He has played as a guest principal with the Royal Concertgebouw, the London Symphony Orchestra and the Chamber Orchestra of Europe.

Robert teaches at the Royal Welsh College of Music and Drama and gives an annual class at the Royal Academy of Music in London. He has given masterclasses at the Royal College of Music, Trinty Laban, Birmingham Conservatoire, Beijing Conservatoire and the San Francisco Conservatory.

Robert is married to the violinist Lucy Gould and lives in Cardiff with their three children. In his spare time he enjoys distance running and is a regular marathon runner.

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## St Cecilia ORCHESTRA

RIPON CATHEDRAL  
22 OCTOBER 2016 7:30PM  
21<sup>st</sup> Anniversary  
Concert

**Tchaikovsky - *The 1812 Overture***  
**Bruch - *Violin Concerto***  
**(Soloist: Tasmin Little)**  
**Holst - *Planets Suite***

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## Curzon Ripon - More than just a cinema



**Saturday 19 November 2016, 7.30pm**  
**Ripon Cathedral**

**Howard Goodall: Eternal Light:  
A Requiem  
Vaughan Williams: Dona Nobis Pacem  
Fantasia on a Theme of Thomas Tallis**

John Dunford - conductor • Orchestra D'Amici  
Wendy Goodson - soprano • Thom Meredith - baritone

Tickets: £20 reserved; £18 unreserved from the Cathedral Shop, 07736 759930 or online at [riponchoralsociety.org.uk](http://riponchoralsociety.org.uk)

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And any others who have donated to the Society since this programme went to press.

## NEWS AND FORTHCOMING EVENTS

Please access the Ripon Youth Music Network's new website at **<http://riponyouthmusic.net>** which is being developed to provide help, encouragement, advice and information for young people and their parents about choosing an instrument, finding a teacher, buying and repairing musical instruments, details of music groups and a music what's-on guide for young people.

**Friday 14 October:** A Celebration of Live Music Now with Steppin' Out (jazz quintet) and Meridiem (flute and harp) and supper 6.45pm at the Garden Rooms, Tennants, Harmby Road, Leyburn. Tickets £40 from 01904 543381.

**Saturday 15 October:** Anna Tsybuleva, the 2015 winner of the Leeds International Piano Competition, will be the soloist in Chopin's Piano Concerto No. 2 with the Royal Philharmonic Orchestra at Leeds Town Hall. She will be playing for us in Ripon Cathedral at our last concert of the season on 13 March.

**20–22 October:** Art for Youth North. An exhibition of paintings, ceramics, photography and sculpture by talented northern artists at affordable prices at Queen Mary's School, Topcliffe. Private viewing and reception on 19 October from 6.30pm to 9.30pm. Tickets at £12 each available from Henrietta Graham (01765 640291) or £15 at the door.

**Saturday 22 October:** St Cecilia Orchestra's 21st Anniversary Gala Concert will be taking place at 7.30pm in Ripon Cathedral when Tasmin Little will be the soloist in Bruch's Violin Concerto No. 1. The programme also includes Tchaikovsky's "1812" Overture and the complete *Planets* Suite by Gustav Holst. Tickets available from Richard Russell - 01765 677413.

**Saturday 12 November:** The Concert Society will again be supporting the Ripon Young Musicians of the Year Competition, where the adjudicator will be the soprano Lynne Dawson. The Finalists Concert and prize giving will take place at 7.30pm in Holy Trinity Church, Ripon.

**Thursday Lunchtime Concerts at 1pm in Ripon Cathedral** (admission free):

13 Oct: Paul Derrett, organ  
20 Oct: Sedbergh School Chapel Choir  
3 Nov: Students from Leeds University  
10 Nov: Elizabeth Charlesworth, soprano  
17 Nov: Dishforth Military Wives' Choir  
24 Nov: Students from Leeds University

For full details of Music and Arts Events in North Yorkshire, please go to the Events Diary at <http://www.stcticketing.org>

## LAST SEASON IN REVIEW – WHAT THE PAPERS SAID

**Elizabeth Watts *soprano* and Julius Drake *piano***

*"The Cathedral Concert Society's website homepage makes no claims for the quality of its concerts. It simply offers performances during the winter mostly on the second Monday evening of each month in the wonderful setting and acoustic of Ripon Cathedral chancel. If you haven't experienced one of these concerts, then book for the next one. The performances are world class. If you have never been to one of these concerts forget that it is 'classical music.' No, it is just music, brilliantly performed. Elizabeth Watt's voice is one of the most beautiful I have ever heard. It sounds effortless and you know that she can make it do exactly as she wants..."*

**Olivia Sham *piano***

*"...The Ripon Cathedral Concert Society is moving from strength to strength. The audience on 9th November ranged in age from the early teens to the 90s and audience numbers from season ticket holders and individuals seem to be growing at every concert."*

## The Classic Buskers

*"...This concert is something that words or certainly this reviewer cannot adequately describe; but try this... imagine the musical and comic genius of Dudley Moore reincarnated in the guise of two men with a squeeze box and a box of whistles!"*

## The Horns of Opera North

*"The large audience was buzzing at the end. Much had been learnt about the instrument and German romantic music. All had basked in the rich sounds of the luscious music, and enjoyed a stimulating evening."*

**Krycia Osostowicz *violin* and Daniel Tong *piano***

*"In his Violin Sonatas Beethoven at times asks the violin to hammer like a piano and the piano to sing like a violin but Osostowicz and Tong were equal to this, seamlessly exchanging timbres. Daniel Tong played with joyful virtuosity throughout..."*

# Cathedral Concert Society

## 2016–2017 season

(all concerts are at 7.30pm in the quire of Ripon Cathedral unless otherwise stated)

### Ensemble Perpetuo -

**Fenella Humphreys** violin,

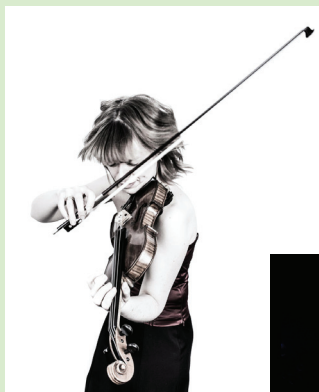
**Andrew Berridge** viola

and **Cara Berridge** cello

**Schubert, Sibelius, Martinů, Mozart,**

**Adrian Sutton** and **Beethoven**

*Monday 14 November 2016*



### Harry the Piano - a pre-Christmas concert for the family

**Any tune, any style at the drop of a hat**

*Sunday 4 December 2016, 3pm*

*in Sharow Church*

**Nick Pritchard** tenor,

**Ian Tindale** piano

**Schubert: *Die schöne Müllerin***

*Monday 16 January 2017*



**Joe Shiner** clarinet with the innovative  
wind quintet **The Magnard Ensemble**

**Messiaen, Bach, Waley-Cohen,**

**Mozart, Debussy, Britten** and **Barber**

*Monday 13 February 2017*



**Anna Tsybuleva** piano

**A recital by the winner of the 2015**

**Leeds International Piano Competition**

*Monday 13 March 2017*



**Tickets and further information from [www.riponconcerts.co.uk](http://www.riponconcerts.co.uk)**