

A German Requiem, Op 45 Johannes Brahms (1833-1897)

- I. Blessed are they that mourn
- II. Behold, all flesh is as the grass
- III. Lord, make me to know
- IV. How lovely is Thy dwelling place
- V. Ye now are sorrowful
- VI. Here on earth have we no continuing place
- VII. Blessed are the dead

Johannes Brahms (1833-97) never said definitively why he composed his German Requiem, but he sketched out one theme in 1854, during the final illness of his mentor and great friend Robert Schumann, and completed six movements after Brahms' own beloved mother died in 1865. A rapturously received 1868 performance of this version for mixed chorus, baritone soloist, and full orchestra assured Brahms' fame. Afterward, he added a soprano solo (now the fifth movement) as a memorial to his mother. The final shape of the piece mirrors the arch-like structure of much of J.S. Bach's music, which Brahms admired: quiet, consoling Movements 1 and 7; drama in Movements 2 and 6; soloists joining the chorus in Movements 3, 5, and 6; and a gentle central choral Movement 4 evoking a home in Heaven.

The musical tradition that Brahms inherited from Mozart and Berlioz was to memorialize the dead by setting the Latin-language text of the Roman Catholic requiem mass. While he was knowledgeable about Martin Luther's German-language translation of the Bible, Brahms was religiously agnostic, considering himself a humanist. In fact, he wanted to name the piece "A Human Requiem." For his text, he started from scratch, choosing passages from both the Old and New Testaments that address universal concerns for those left behind: the fragility of life, the inevitability of death, the pain of grief, and, with patience, eventual acceptance and even joy. The first words the listener hears are "Blessed are they that mourn; for they shall be comforted." The closing words are "Blessed are they who die in the Lord, blessed, blessed."

Brahms set the words in German to make them accessible to his listeners. This evening's performance in English accords with Brahms' use of the vernacular.

—Edie Stern

Chorus

Soprano

Maggie Benham
Katelyn Breen
Kelly Danger
Kat Felicis Ioco
Amanda Jensen
Mary Kettlewell
Therese Kulas
Laura LeVoir
Anna Maher
Mallory Rabehl
Molly Schindler
Karen Toebe
Angela Walberg

Tenor

Joe Andrews
Scott Azbill-Salisbury
Robert Banks
Don Barbee
Tom Berg
Jonathan Flory
Ron Jay
Trenton Johnson
Matt Polum
Bryan Reed
Graham Remple
Lowell Rice
Anthony Rohr
Seth Tychon Steidl

Alto

Janice Barbee
Mary Benbenek
Claire Bias
Willow Gerhard
Alice Golter
Mary Gregory
Liza Hartshorn
Shawn Holt
Holly MacDonald
Lisa Sinclair
Rhea Sullivan
Lara Trujillo
Natalie Wishcop
Sarah Zuber

Bass

Adam Arnold
John Azbill-Salisbury
Waldyn Benbenek
Scott Benson
Scott Gorman
Ryan Johnson
Nick Menzhuber
John Orbison
Richard Rames
Niko Simmons
Mike Tober
Rick Treece
Sam Vinitsky
Trevor Woggon

Orchestra

VIOLIN 1 Victoria Athmann* (*Concertmaster*), Sue Bennefeld
Maya Gitch, Beth Henningsen, Amy Letson*, Suki Sun
VIOLIN 2 Karen Kozak*, Lorine Menzhuber (*Orchestra Manager*)
Betsy Lofgren, Karen Neinstadt*, Mackenzie Powell
VIOLA Louis Berg-Arnold, Ann Bur, Laura Bidgood
Teresa Mager, Aija Ronis
CELLO Aaron Barrett, David Downing, Sara Hertz
Karin Holmberg Kimble, Hayley Zacheis
BASS Jason Anderson, Ann Marie McIntire
FLUTE Suzanne Benson, Joseph Wypych
PICCOLO Nancy Hagfors
OBOE Debbie Clapp, Donna Votino
CLARINET Louise Buckley, Brian Krysinski
BASSOON Elizabeth Brandt, Gene Scholtens
CONTRA BASSOON Alice Anderson
FRENCH HORN Mike Engh, Ken Lovely, Bob Olsen, Cristina Werling
TRUMPET Pete Berg, Bob Zobal
TROMBONE Jason Adriano, John Herman, Charles Watt
TUBA Aaron Rolloff
TIMPANI Emily Curran
KEYBOARD/HARP Jean Orbison Van Heel

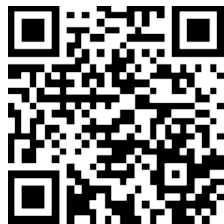
*indicates viola on movement 1

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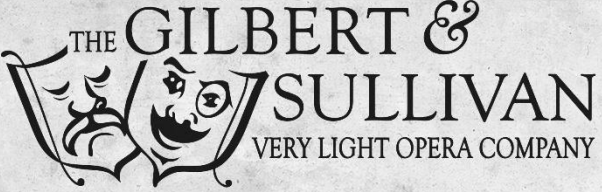
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Johannes Brahms
A German Requiem
Sung in English
Randal A. Buikema
Conductor
7:30 PM
Thursday, June 5, 2025
Normandale Lutheran Church
6100 Normandale Rd
Edina, MN
GSVLOC.org
Free • Donations gratefully accepted