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Ein Deutsches Requiem, Opus 45
Johannes Brahms (1833-1897)

- I. CHORUS
Selig sind, die da Leid tragen
- II. CHORUS
Denn alles Fleisch, es ist wie Gras
- III. BARITONE AND CHORUS
Herr, lehre doch mich
- IV. CHORUS
Wie lieblich sind deine Wohnungen
- V. SOPRANO AND CHORUS
Ihr habt nun Traurigkeit
- VI. BARITONE AND CHORUS
Denn wir haben keine bleibende Statt
- VII. CHORUS
Selig sind die Toten

Violin

Geoffrey Robson
Denise Chividian
Mary Ruf

'Cello

Thomas Hudson
Andy Woodruff

Harp

Wendy Kerner Lucas

Viola

Victoria Kuan
Chris Hisey

Bass

Ed Allman

Timpani

Gwen Burgett

Piano

Holland Jancaitis

A German Requiem, Opus 45: English translation

I. Chorus

Blessed are they that mourn: for they shall be comforted.

-Matthew 5

They that sow in tears shall reap in joy.

They go forth and weep, and bear precious seed,
and shall come again with rejoicing
bringing their sheaves with them.

-Psalm 126

II. Chorus

For all flesh is as the grass,
And all the glory of humanity is like the flowers of grass:
The grass withers, and the flower is fallen away.

-1 Peter 1

So be patient, dear brethren, until the coming of the Lord.
See how the farmer waits for the precious fruit of the earth
And is patient for it until it receives the morning and evening rains.
So be ye patient.

-James 5

But the world of the Lord remains for eternity.
The redeemed of the Lord shall again return,
And come to Zion with shouts of joy;
Eternal joy shall be upon their heads;
Joy and delight shall overwhelm them
And sadness and sighing will flee away.

-Isaiah 35

III. Baritone & Chorus

Lord, teach me to know that there must be an end of me,
And that my life has an endpoint, and I must leave it.
Behold, my days are a handbreath before you,
And my life is as nothing before you.
Oh, humanity is as nothing, and yet they live so surely.
They go about like a shadow,
And make great unrest for themselves;
They heap things up, and do not know who will gather them.
And now, O Lord, who shall comfort me? My hope is in Thee.

-Psalm 39

The souls of the righteous are in God's hand,
And no trouble shall disturb them.

-Solomon 3

IV. Chorus

How lovely are your dwellings, O Lord of Hosts!
My soul longs, indeed it faints for the courts of the Lord;
My body and soul rejoice in the living God.
It is will for them who live in your house ever singing your praise.

-Psalm 84

V. Soprano & Chorus

Ye now have great sadness; but I will see you again,
and your hearts will rejoice, and no one will take your joy from you.

-John 16

Behold with your eyes:
I have suffered for a little while, and yet I have found great comfort.
I will comfort you, as one is comforted by his mother.

-Ecclesiastes 51

VI. Baritone & Chorus

For here have we no continuing place, but we seek one that is to come.

-Hebrews 13

Behold, I tell you a mystery:
We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed;
This will happen suddenly,
In the blink of an eye, at the time of the last trumpet.
Then shall the trumpet shall sound,
And the dead shall be raised incorruptible,
And we shall be changed.
Then shall be brought to pass the word that is written:
Death is swallowed up in victory.
Death, where is your sting? Hell, where is your victory?

-1 Corinthians 15

Lord, you are worthy to receive glory and honor and power,
For you have created all things,
And by your will they have their being and were created.

-Revelation 4

VII. Chorus

Blessed are the dead who die in the Lord, from now on.
Yes, says the Spirit, that they will rest from their labors,
For their works follow after them.”

-Revelation 14

The Nytvedt Concert Series

presents

The Weston Summer Chorus

Ellen Dickinson, director

Allan Wieman, baritone

Morgen Dieringer, soprano

Thursday, July 29, 2004

8:00 p.m.

Norfield Congregational Church

Weston, Connecticut

Weston Summer Chorus 2004

Soprano

Nancy Brant
Morgen Dieringer
Lily Edelman
Julia Guarino
Kristen Hahn
Doris Kaye
Elizabeth Kemp
Shelby Miller
Ina Montelius
Jan Mack Northcutt
Noel Peslak
Catherine Pross
Cheryl Purvis
Catherine Sementini
Pat Sidas
Amanda Ziobro

Tenor

Mark Beams
Brendan DiPiazza
Steve Evans
Roger Gilson
Jeremy Hetzler
Judith Hunt
Chris O'Neill
Rosalie Skinner
Edgar Smith

Rehearsal pianists:

Holland Jancaitis, Mark Swicegood, Frederick Chen

Section rehearsal leaders:

Shelby Miller, Morgen Dieringer, Holland Jancaitis

Special thanks to the staff and Board of Music at Norfield Congregational Church, especially: Denise Zako, Karl Jackson, Rev. Lee Moore, Prue Bliss, and Karen Moraitis; Malcolm Dickinson, Shelby Miller, Jim Miller, Bobbie Suratt, Holland Jancaitis, Morgen Dieringer, and Mark Swicegood; and guest rehearsal conductor, Professor Marguerite Brooks.

Alto

Lois Bechtel
Elfie Brandon
Emma Edelman
Charlotte Hanulik
Susan Jordan
Sylvia Marsh
Zayne McFarlane
Karen Moraitis
Beryl Rowland
Jo Shute
Elizabeth Stewart
Bobbie Suratt

Bass

Malcolm Dickinson
Charles Heck
Chick Lyttle
Jim Miller
David Purvis
Eric Stones
Allan Wieman

Ein Deutsches Requiem, Opus 45: Notes on the program

Johannes Brahms (1833-1897) is a composer known for spending great amounts of time crafting, revising, and perfecting his music. His “German Requiem” is no exception. From his initial sketches through to the first complete performance of the work is a span of about eleven years, and it is certainly possible that he had begun forming ideas for the work long before.

This requiem stands apart from others in that it is not a Latin, liturgical, Roman Catholic *Mass for the Dead*. It is a work composed in Brahms’ own language, hence the name “A *German* Requiem.” Brahms stated that rather than a “protestant” requiem or even a “German” requiem, he could call it a requiem for *humanity*. Its essence is solace for those who mourn, rather than prayers for the dead. It is interesting to note that “Jesus” or “Christ” do not appear anywhere, although elements of Christian theology are implied.

The form of the Requiem is a great arch, in seven movements. At the center is the jewel “How Lovely are Thy Dwellings, O Lord of Hosts.” This fourth movement is the most commonly performed section of the work, and is an uplifting expression of faith and praise.

Movements three and five, though quite different in character, feature soloists who interact with the chorus. The third movement is a monumental work, beginning with the invocation, “Lord, teach me” and evolving into two fugues. The first fugue is punctuated by ever-louder repetitions of “Now, Lord... who shall comfort me?” The second, greater fugue brings a resolution, “The souls of the righteous are in the hand of God, and no trouble shall disturb them.” It is marked by a pedal point, or constant bass note, played by the timpani and low strings. The fifth movement is the most peaceful, with the soprano’s consoling “I will comfort you, as a mother comforts.” This movement was the last to be added, and was finished after the death of Brahms’ own mother.

Movements two and six both begin with expressions of the temporary nature of humanity: in movement two, “Then all flesh is as the grass; the grass withers...” and in movement six, “Then we have here no continuing place.” The second movement is a haunting unison melody, which eventually turns on the word “aber” (“but”): “The grass withers, the flower falls away, *but* the word of the Lords remains for eternity.” This leads into a triumphant passage begun by the basses, “The redeemed of the Lord shall return and come to Zion with shouts of joy.” In the sixth movement, the solo baritone introduces the transition, “Behold... we shall all be changed.” What follows is a dance-like passage including, “Death, where is thy sting? Grave, where is thy victory.” The repetition of key words “death,” “grave,” “hell,” and “where,” gives this passage a taunting quality. It closes with a fugue, “Lord, you are worthy to receive glory and honor and power...”

In the first movement, the Requiem opens with the consolation, “Blessed are they that mourn, for they shall be comforted,” beginning the focus on the living as they grieve the dead. In the seventh and final movement, Brahms offers a prayer for the dead, “Blessed are the dead who die in the Lord... They rest from their labors, and their works follow after them.” The work comes full circle, ending on the same word that it began: “selig” or “blessed.”

-Ellen Dickinson, 2004