

BRAHMS: A GERMAN REQUIEM, Op. 45

PRESENTED BY THE COMBINED CHOIRS AND ORCHESTRAS
OF
ARMSTRONG, COOPER AND ROBBINSDALE HIGH SCHOOLS

DR. CHARLES SCHWARTZ, GUEST CONDUCTOR

I. POCO ANDANTE, E CON ESPRESSIONE

Matt. 5:4

Blessed are they that mourn;
for they shall have comfort.

Ps. 126: 5-6

They that sow in tears
shall reap in joy.
Who goeth forth and weepeth
and beareth precious seed
shall doubtless return with rejoicing
and bring his sheaves with him.

II. MODERATO, IN MODO DI MARCIA— POCO SOSTENUTO— ALLEGRO NON TROPPO

I Pet. 1:24

Behold all flesh is as the grass,
and all the goodness of man
is as the flower of grass;
for lo, the grass with'reth
and the flower thereof decayeth.

Jas. 5:7

Now, therefore, be patient, O my brethren,
unto the coming of Christ.
See how the husbandman waiteth
for the precious fruit of the earth,
and hath long patience for it,
until he receive
the early and the latter rain.
So be ye patient.

I Pet. 1:25

Albeit the Lord's word endureth forever.

Isa. 35:10

The redeemed of the Lord shall return again
and come rejoicing unto Zion;
gladness, joy everlasting upon their heads shall be;
joy and gladness, these shall be their portion,
and tears and sighing shall flee from them.

III. ANDANTE MODERATO

Ps. 39: 5-8

Lord, make me to know
the measure of my days on earth,
to consider my frailty, that I must perish.
Surely, all my days here are as an handbreathe to Thee
and my lifetime is as naught to Thee.
Verily, mankind walketh in a vain show,
and their best state is vanity;
man passeth away like a shadow,
he is disquieted in vain;
he reapeth up riches
and cannot tell who shall gather them.
Now, Lord, oh what do I wait for?
My hope is in Thee.

Wisd. of Sol. 3:1

But the righteous souls
are in the hand of God,
nor pain nor grief shall nigh them.

IV. CON MOTO MODERATO

Ps. 84:1-2, 4

How lovely is Thy dwelling place,
O Lord of Hosts!
For my soul it longeth, yea fainteth
for the courts of the Lord:
my soul and body crieth out,
yea for the living God.
Oh blessed are they that dwell within Thy house:
they praise Thy name ever more.

V. ANDANTE

John 16:22

Ye now are sorrowful;
howbeit, ye shall again behold me
and your heart shall be joyful,
and your joy no man taketh from you.

Isa. 66:13

Yea, I will comfort you

Baritone:
Soprano:

JACK JAEGER
ZOMA EDSTROM

Directors:
ARMSTRONG

RICHARD EDSTROM
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COOPER

HAROLD WILDUNG
DONALD BALK

ROBBINSDALE

JOHN ADAMS
JAMES BERG

as one whom his own mother comforteth.

Eccles. 51:27

Look upon me: ye know that
for a little time labor and sorrow were mine,
but at the last I have found comfort.

VI. ANDANTE-VIVACE-ALLEGRO

Heb. 13:14

Here on earth have we no continuing place,
howbeit we seek one to come.

I Cor. 15:51-2, 54-5

Lo, I unfold unto you a mystery:
we shall not all sleep when He cometh,
but we shall all be changed,
in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye,
at the sound of the trumpet.
For the trumpet shall sound,
and the dead shall be raised incorruptible,
and we shall all be changed.

Then, what of old was written,
the same shall be brought to pass.

For death shall be swallowed in victory!
Grave, where is thy triumph?

Death, where is Thy sting?

Rev. 4:11

Worthy art Thou to be praised,
Lord of honor and might,
for Thou hast earth and heaven created,
and for Thy good pleasure
all things have their being
and are and were created.

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The image shows a musical score for a hymn. The lyrics are: "All things have their being and are and were created, and we shall all be changed, in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the sound of the trumpet. For the trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall all be changed. Then, what of old was written, the same shall be brought to pass. For death shall be swallowed in victory! Grave, where is thy triumph? Death, where is Thy sting? Worthy art Thou to be praised, Lord of honor and might, for Thou hast earth and heaven created, and for Thy good pleasure all things have their being and are and were created." The score includes vocal lines for Baritone and Soprano, and piano accompaniment. The lyrics are written below the notes. The score is tilted at an angle.

NOTES

It was with "A German Requiem" that Brahms first won general acceptance in Europe as a composer to be reckoned with.

In 1856 his mentor, Robert Schumann, died, and a year later Brahms took up again a rejected slow movement of a D minor concerto (originally planned as a symphony) and reworked it as a choral setting of words from the first Epistle of Peter, "Behold all flesh is as the grass". By 1861 he had built a four-movement cantata around this setting. Brahms stated later that the work was not inspired directly by the death of his mother or by the death of Schumann. He claimed that he had "the whole of humanity in mind".

The "Requiem" was completed during the summer of 1866 while Brahms was staying in Switzerland in a villa on the Züricherberg.

The first three movements only were performed in Vienna on December 1, 1867; they were unfavorably received, with some hissing, chiefly because of the fugue at the end of the third movement. This fugal coda is developed above a tonic "D" in the bass instruments of the orchestra. This unorthodox handling of the fugue, especially in a "Requiem" setting caused members of an "old guard" to "greet the applause of the majority, and the appearance of the composer in response to it, with continuous hissing, thus performing a 'requiem' over decorum and good breeding in a Vienna concert-hall..." (Hanslick, in his 1867 review).

Brahms conducted the second presentation on Good Friday April 10, 1868, in Bremen. The event was a triumph.

This is not a liturgical "Requiem". Brahms was not a conventionally religious man, yet, the music indisputably tells us how much consolation he drew from the words of Holy Writ that are set here; much of the music is sombre, but each movement ends in a spirit of hope. There is no prayer for the souls of the dead. On the contrary, this is an act of consolation for the living, a hope that all may be well with us when we pass hence. The focal point of a Catholic Requiem mass is the "Dies Irae", the vision of Divine judgement. It does not occur in the "German Requiem".

In our performance tonight we end with the great fugue of victory at the conclusion of the sixth movement, "Worthy art Thou to be praised".