



JOHANNES BRAHMS

A German Requiem

Op. 45

NATIONAL PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH
FESTIVAL CHOIR, SOLOISTS & ORCHESTRA

PALM SUNDAY
APRIL 13, 2025
5 PM
WASHINGTON, DC



JOHANNES BRAHMS

A German Requiem
Op. 45

English Translation by
Robert Shaw

NATIONAL PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH
FESTIVAL CHOIR, SOLOISTS, AND ORCHESTRA

Danielle Talamantes, Soprano
Kerry Wilkerson, Bass-Baritone
Todd Fickley Organ

Michael Denham, Music Director and Conductor

Blessed Are They

Blessed they, blest are they who mourn, for they shall be comforted.

Mathew 5:4

They that sow in tears and weeping surely shall reap with joyful singing, reap in joy. Who goeth forth and weepeth, bearing precious seed, shall doubtless return with rejoicing, bringing his sheaves with him.

Psalms 126:5-6

Selig sind, die da Leid tragen, den sie sollen getröstet werden.

Die mit Tränen säen, werden mit Freuden ernten. Sie gehen hin, und weinen und tragen enden Samen; und kommen mit Freuden, und bringen ihre Garben.

Behold, All Flesh Is As the Grass

Behold, all flesh is as the grass, and all the glory of mankind is as the flower of grass. For lo, the grass withereth, and the flower thereof is fallen.

1 Peter 1:24

Now therefore be patient, my dear brethren, unto the coming of the Lord. See how the husbandman waiteth for the precious fruit of the earth, and with patience he waiteth till he receive the early rain and also the later rain. So be ye patient.

James 5:7

But the word of the Lord endureth forever.

1 Peter 1:25

And the ransomed of the Lord shall return with singing unto Zion, coming rejoicing, joyful. Joy everlasting shall crown their heads forevermore. Gladness and glory welcome and embrace them, and grief and sighing shall flee from them.

Isaiah 35:10

Denn alles Fleisch es ist wir Gras, und alle Herrlichkeit des Menschen wie des Grases Blumen. Das Gras ist verdorret und die Blume abgefallen.

So seid nun geduldig, lieben Brüder, bis auf die Zukunft des Herrn. Siehe ein Ackermann wartet auf die köstliche Frucht der Erde, und ist geduldig darüber, bis er empfahe den Morgenregen und Abendregen. So seid geduldig.

Aber des Herrn Wort bleibet in Ewigkeit.

Die Erlöseten des Herrn werden wieder kommen, und gen Zion kommen mit Jauchzen; Freude, ewige Freude wird über ihrem Haupte sein. Freude und Wonne, werden sie ergreifen, und Schmerz und Seufzen wird weg müssen.

Lord, Make Me to Know

Lord, make me to know the measure of my days on earth, that my life is but frailty, and I must perish. Surely, all my days are as an handbreadth to thee, and my lifetime is as naught to thee. Verily, mankind walketh in a vain show; even his best state is vanity. He goeth about as a shadow in his anxieties, and in vain he heapeth up riches, but knoweth, nay, knoweth not who shall gather them. Now, Lord, what then do I wait for? My hope is in thee!

Psalms 39:4-7

For the souls of the righteous are in the hand of God, and ne'er shall harm reach unto them.

Wisdom of Solomon 3:1

Herr, lehre doch mich, das sein End er mit mir haben muss, und mein Leben ein Ziel hat, und ich davon muss. Siehe, meine Tage sind einer Hand breit vor dir. Ach, wir gar nichts sind alle Menschen, die doch so sicher leben! Sie gehen daher wie ein Schemen, und machen ihnen viel vergebliche Unruhe; sie sammeln, und wissen nicht wer es kriegen wird. Nun, Herr, wes soll ich mich trösten? Ich hoffe auch dich.

Der Gerechten Seelen sind in Gottes Hand, und keine Qual rühret sie an.

WELCOME

Dr. Ray Hylton, Sr.

OFFERTORY

O World, I Must Leave You, Op. 122, No. 3

Johannes Brahms

O Welt, ich muss dich lassen

Todd Fickley, organ



Here an offering will be recieved.

How Lovely Is Thy Dwelling Place

How lovely is thy dwelling place, O Lord of Hosts! For my soul, it longeth and fainteth for the courts of the Lord. My heart and flesh cry out for joy unto the living God. Blest are they who make thy house their dwelling; they praise thy name evermore.

Psalms 84:1, 2, 4

Wie lieblich sind deine Wohnungen, Herr Zebaoth! Meine Seele verlangt und sehnet sich nach den Vorhöfen des Herrn; mein Leib und Seele freuen sich in dem lebendigen Gott. Wohl denen, die in deinem Hause wohnen, die loben dich immerdar.

Ye Now Are Sorrowful

Ye now are sorrowful. Weep not, for I will see you again, and your heart shall be joyful, and your rejoicing no one taketh from you.

John 16:22

And I will comfort, as one who his own mother comforts.

Isaiah 66:13

Look on me, then, for it was but a little time, labor and trouble were mine, yet I have found at last comfort.

Ecclesiasticus 51:27

Ihr habt nun Traurigkeit; aber ich will euch wieder sehen und euer Herz soll sich freuen und eure Freude soll niemand von euch nehmen.

Ich will euch trösten, wie einen seine Mutter tröstet.

Sehet mich an: ich habe eine kleine Zeit, Mühe und Arbeit gehabt und habe grossen Trost gefunden.

Here On Earth We Have No Continuing Place

Here on earth we have no continuing place, wherefore we seek one to come. Hebrews 13:14

Lo, I will show unto you a mystery: We shall not all sleep here forever, 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 all be raised incorruptible, and we shall all be changed. Then what the prophet long hath told, the saying, shall be brought to pass.

For death is swallowed up in victory. Death, O where is thy sting?

Grave, where is thy victory?

1 Corinthians 15:51-52, 54-55

Lord, thou art worthy of honor, praise, and glory and might; by thee alone all things were created, and by thy good will all creatures have their being, and were created.

Revelation 4:11

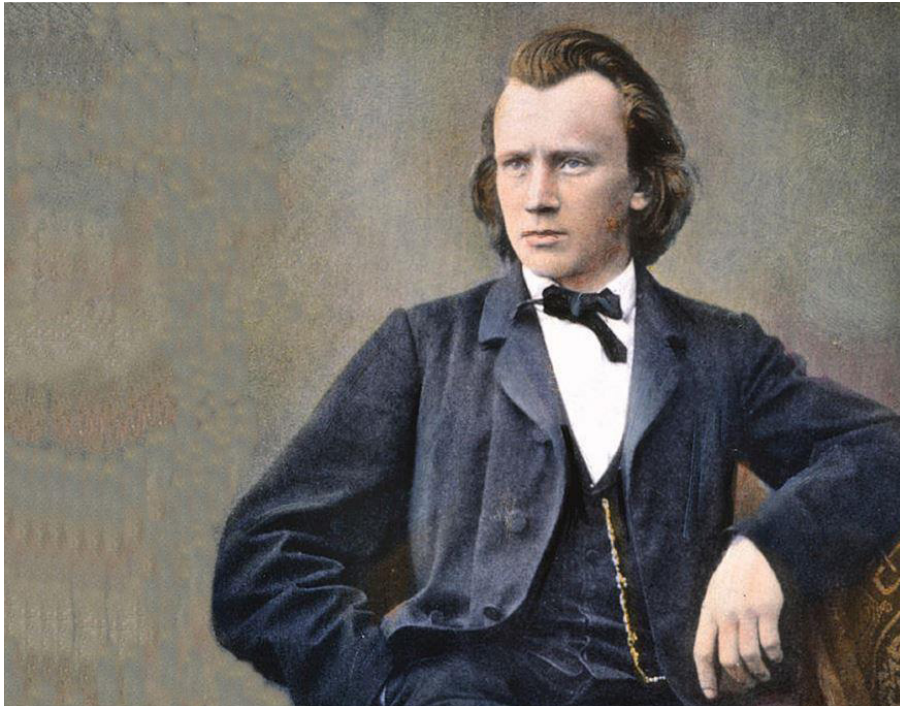
*Denn wir haben hie keine bleibende Statt, sondern die zukünftige suchen wir.
Siehe, ich sage euch ein Geheimnis. Wir werden nich alle entschlafen, wir
werden aber alle verwandelt werden; und dasselbige plötzlich, in einem
Augenblick, zu der Zeit der letzten Posaune! Denn es wird die Posaune schallen,
und di Toten werden auferstehen unverweslich, und wir werden verwandelt werden.
Dann wird erfüllet werden das Wort, das geschrieben steht, Der Tod ist
verschlungen in den Sieg. Tod, wo ist dein Stachel? Hölle, wo ist dein Sieg?
Herr, du bist würdig zu nehmen Preis und Ehre und Kraft, den du hast alle
Dinge erschaffen; und durch deinen Willen haben sie dass Wesen, und sind
geschaffen.*

Blessed Are the Dead

Blessed are the dead, who in the Lord shall die from henceforth. Saith the Spirit:
That they rest now from all their labors, and that their works follow after them.

Revelation 14:13

*Selig sind die Toten, die in dem Herren sterben, von nun an. Ja der Geist spricht:
Dass sie ruhen von ihrer Arbeit; den ihr Werke folgen ihnen nach.*



PROGRAM NOTES

Johannes Brahms (1833-1897) had notions of composing a Requiem before he actually did. Though his motivation for doing so is not completely clear, the death in 1856 of his friend and mentor Robert Schumann, and his mother Christina's passing in 1865, left on him indelible marks. Though it was begun in 1857, he worked on it earnestly in 1866 and 1867, and at age 35 completed it in time for a Good Friday 1868 premiere performance in Bremen Cathedral. A later iteration added the fifth movement ("Ye Now Are Sorrowful"), and was first performed on February 9, 1869 in Leipzig's Gewandhaus.

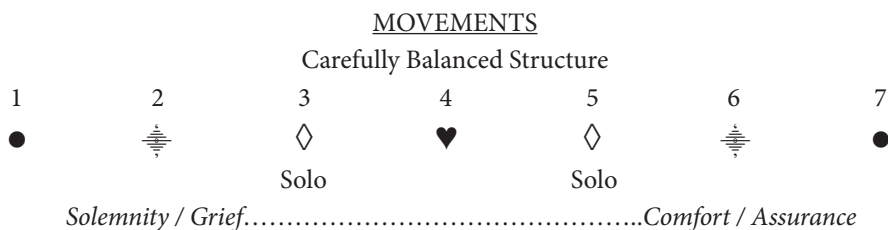
There is no particular dedication attached to it, but his focus seems duly evident: To comfort the living, not to pray for the dead; to hope in resurrection rather than to fear final judgment. For his purposes he eschewed Latin texts of the traditional Roman Catholic Requiem Mass (*Missa de profunctis*), assembling self-chosen passages from the Lutheran Bible (Old Testament, New Testament, and Apocrypha).

The Lutheran Bible was translated by Martin Luther into vernacular German from the Latin Vulgate. Brahms was not a regular churchgoer, but he knew this German Bible well. In appropriating and assembling his chosen texts, he demonstrated understanding of and sensitivity to essential Biblical theology of destiny and hope. The resulting work is at least strongly “theistic” even if not overtly or pointedly Christian. His choice of and allusions to biblical passages range from the Hebrew psalms and prophets, to the Christian gospels and epistles, to apocryphal wisdom, and to Christian apocalyptic. Coupled with a deliberate use of his native tongue, Brahms’ aim is arguably for clarity of expression and immediacy of understanding of what amounts to a fairly precise but timeless message. Hence, the work has been called a “Human” or “Universal” Requiem, as much as a “German” one.

We are singing today’s performance in English, using the legendary Robert Shaw’s translation of the original German, in a beautiful new performance edition by Cory D. Wiken. Mr. Shaw himself conducted over one hundred performances of Brahms’ masterpiece and was eminently qualified to offer his sage and meticulous rendering to English-speaking audiences. I truly believe we are in good company following Brahms’ own impulse toward intelligibility and comprehension. We also are using James Vail’s transcription of woodwind and brass parts for the organ, along with Brahms’ own parts for strings, harp, and timpani as they are. This helps make our efforts more financially feasible by reducing the sheer size of the orchestra without sacrificing symphonic breadth. Coupling his gripping string and timpani parts to the powerful voice of NPC’s Hopkins Organ promises to do justice to Brahms’ grand conception and design.

Brahms ultimately developed a carefully balanced structure of seven movements: Three beginning movements exploring solemnity and grief, and three closing movements highlighting comfort and assurance, together bracketing a single central movement emphasizing the faithfulness and beauty of God’s person and work, God’s character and blessings. The work begins and ends with divine blessing.

Within this compass there is clear trajectory or “arch” from a funeral march to resurrection, and from recognition of mortal reality to a conviction of eternal hope, each clarified by faith and trust in the living God. This trajectory or “arch” can be easily noted in the following scheme:



Questions have persisted about Brahms’ personal existential and spiritual beliefs, but he is said to have remarked, “Nonetheless, I do have my faith.” What is undeniable is that, in his Requiem, he crafted and composed a particularly personal take on ultimate matters that presents quite a different perspective than what would prevailingly have been expected or presumed in liturgical contexts at the time.

In terms of his outlook, it also is striking that Brahms turned to setting Lutheran chorale melodies following the 1896 passing of his dear, long-time friend and colleague Clara Schumann. In a milieu of mourning her loss and, even as he was entering the final throes of illness that claimed his own life early the next year, he gravitated to these congregational tunes and attendant texts of beloved sacred music for catharsis, inspiration, and comfort. The Eleven Chorale Preludes for Organ, Op. 122 were his final compositions.

In 1 Corinthians 15, St. Paul writes,

If Christ is proclaimed as raised from the dead, how can some say there is no resurrection from the dead? If there is no resurrection from the dead, then Christ has not been raised; and if Christ has not been raised, then our proclamation has been in vain. We are even found to be misrepresenting God, because we testified of God that he raised Christ—whom he did not raise if it is true that the dead are not raised. For if the dead are not raised, then Christ has not been raised. If Christ has not been raised, our faith is futile and we are still in our sins. Then those who have died in Christ have perished. If for this life only we have hoped in Christ, we are of all people most to be pitied. But in fact Christ has been raised from the dead, the first fruits of those who have died. For since by man came death, by man came also the resurrection of the dead. For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive.

Dr. Michael Denham
Director of Music Ministries

SOLOISTS

“A velvety, dark-hued soprano that has a limpid seductiveness appropriate to the music!” noted of Mexican-American soprano, **Danielle Talamantes**.

The 2024-2025 season includes Haydn’s *Creation* with the New Dominion Chorale, a duo recital with husband, bass-baritone Kerry Wilkerson with Opera Roanoke, Close Encounters with Music, and the Sitka Music Festival, a featured recital with Lyric Fest of Philadelphia, and the Brahms *Requiem* at National Presbyterian Church in Washington, DC.

Recent season performances included an Alaska recital tour with Sitka Music Festival and Juneau Jazz & Classics, Villa-Lobos’ *Brasileras No. 5* with the Pensacola Symphony, Rossini’s *Petite Messe Solennelle* with the Washington Master Chorale, another duo recital with Mr. Wilkerson at the American Church in Paris, an appearance with the Northwest Bach Festival followed by a five-city homecoming tour throughout Virginia and North Carolina. Additionally, Verdi’s *Requiem* with Pensacola Symphony and the NC Master Chorale, Britten’s *War Requiem* with Opera Roanoke, Haydn’s *Lord Nelson Mass* with Choral Arts of Washington, a world premiere with Washington National Opera’s production of *Written in Stone*, a turn as Mimi in Puccini’s *La Bohème* with the Jacksonville Symphony and the Northeren Lights Festival, Frasquita in Bizet’s *Carmen* and Anna in Verdi’s *Nabucco* with the Metropolitan Opera, Beatrice in Catàn’s *Il Postino* with VA Opera and the title role of *Susannah* with Opera Roanoke.

Professional recordings include *At That Hour: Art Songs of Henry Dellinger* on the Avie Record Label, and *Canciones españoles* and *Heaven and Earth: A Duke Ellington Songbook* on the MSR Classics label.

With a voice hailed by *The Washington Post* for its “amber tone” and commanding presence, bass-baritone **Kerry Wilkerson** is a dynamic and expressive artist whose performances resonate with depth and artistry. His Carnegie Hall debut in Vaughan Williams’ *Sancta Civitas* was met with critical acclaim, solidifying his reputation as a compelling soloist on concert and oratorio stages across the country.

A distinguished veteran of the United States Army Chorus, Wilkerson has sung for world leaders and dignitaries, bringing his artistry to audiences of international prominence. He has also performed with the United States Air Force Singing Sergeants and the esteemed Robert Shaw Festival Singers. His operatic credits include roles in *Die Zauberflöte*, *La Traviata*, *Otello*, and *La Bohème*, while his concert engagements have placed him alongside major orchestras and ensembles, including the National Symphony Orchestra, National Philharmonic, Pacific Symphony, Jacksonville Symphony and La Jolla Symphony.

A sought-after soloist, he has brought his resonant voice to masterworks such as Handel's *Messiah*, Beethoven's *Missa Solemnis*, Bach's *Mass in B Minor*, Mendelssohn's *Elijah*, and Verdi's *Requiem*, appearing with ensembles such as the City Choir of Washington, the Washington Chorus, Choralis, and the North Carolina Master Chorale. His performances of Vaughan Williams' *Dona Nobis Pacem* with the Air Force Symphony Orchestra at the Kennedy Center and Kodály's *Te Deum* with the Oregon Music Festival further showcase his versatility and artistry.

Wilkerson frequently shares the recital stage with his wife, soprano Danielle Talamantes, in critically acclaimed duo programs that highlight the breadth of their combined artistry. Whether in recital, opera, or concert, his performances captivate audiences with their richness, sincerity, and emotional depth.

Todd Fickley is the Organist of National Presbyterian Church and founder of "The Bach Project." Equally comfortable at the podium, harpsichord, piano, and organ, Mr. Fickley's career spans over 35 years performing across the United States, Europe, and Israel. He collaborates with a wide variety of ensembles, such as the National Symphony Orchestra, the Baltimore Symphony Orchestra, the Washington Ballet, the National Philharmonic, and the Three Notch'd Road baroque ensemble. He also performs frequently as part of the innovative Seipp/Fickley Trumpet and Organ Duo.

A native Washingtonian, he began his organ studies already as an accomplished pianist at the Washington National Cathedral under Bruce Neswick. At the age of 23, Mr. Fickley was made a Fellow of the American Guild of Organists (AGO). He also holds the AGO Choirmaster Diploma as well as the M.A. in Organ Performance with High Distinction from the University of Wales.

A prize-winning organist and specialist in the music of J. S. Bach, Mr. Fickley has been featured numerous times on NPR and PRI. In 2014 he launched "The Bach Project," a cycle of concerts performing all of Bach's organ works, the first time in almost a quarter of a century that such a project has been undertaken in the DC area. The first album on the MSR Classics label was praised in *Fanfare Magazine* as "some of the most enthralling Bach organ playing you are likely to hear anywhere by anyone." The Project has taken him to Germany in 2015 and 2018 researching and performing on historic organs.

He is frequently seen as a recitalist, accompanist, and concerto soloist on all three keyboard instruments. He also is in demand as a conductor and lecturer in the Washington DC metro area, and enjoys teaching privately. He is an Officer in the Order of St. John, and a member of the National Society of Washington Family Descendants, and the Sons of the American Revolution.

FESTIVAL ORCHESTRA

Organ

Todd Fickley

Violin I

Sandy Choi,
Concertmaster

Solomia Gorokhivska
Shaundra Culatta
Kristin Bakkegard
Emily Ricks

Violin II

Bill Tortolano
Anna Kong
Mary Ann Tortolano
Ivan Hodge
Pamela Lassell

Viola

Jennifer Ries
Caitlyn Wick
Matthew Maffett
Nina Kiken

Cello

Atticus Mellor-Goldman
Sam Swift
Katherine Hufnagle
Elvy Swift

Bass

T. Allan Stewart
Paul Hunt

Harp

Gréta Kristin Ásgeirssen

Timpani

Julie Angelis Boehler

Personnel

Pamela Lassell

Concert Logistics

Devin Wulff

Program

Michael Denham
Devin Wulff

Sound & Lighting

Bill McNett

FESTIVAL CHOIR

SOPRANO

Barbara Alexander
Renee Andrews
Hayley Ashbaugh
Lisbeth Bagnold
Martha Blakely
Caylyn Bodger
Linda Brubaker
Sherry Brukbacher
Layla Bunch
Janice Childress
Patricia Connors
Beck Cznadel
Beatrice Dang
Mary Alice Davidson
Diane Fresquez

Stephanie Gauzens
Phylis Geller
Janet Gregory
Margaret Grosh
Anne Harris
Cheryl Hatch
Kristine Heine
Meimon Hsu
Kathy Hughes
Sheri Jackson
Joanna Lam
Phylis Lauber
Deborah MacKay
Debora Madsen
Ranit Mishori

Eve Mościcki
Yoonhee Mun
Holly Novak
Tess Ottinger
Mindy Peterson
Kelsie Rathbun
Janice Sessing
Catherine Van Rompaey
Janice Ware
Sarah Williams
Janette Woods
Linda Zebooker
Joanna Zorack-Greene

ALTO

Alison Adkins
Jen Barrett
Beth Beisel
Sarah Boxer
Mary Ellen Cain
Catherine Clevenger
Jenny Coneff
Christine Dieterich
Christine Feintheil
Carolyn Gasarch

Phylis Gerstell
Mihal Gross
Gerri Hall
Carol Jackson
Maureen Kline
Ruth Kurzbauer
Laurie Lee
Joan H. Lewis
Joyce Martin
Denise Miller

Tehila Onyukwu
Margaret Ray
Annette Reilly
Lydia Rice
Dottie Seep
Karin Strydom
Jennifer Taylor
Julia Wolz
Martha Young Freedberg
Kathleen Tevnan

TENOR

Bianca Benincasa
Edward Blanton
John Connors
John Cox
Adrianne Dale
Scott Dickson

Morgan Dodd
Paul Hildreth
Pete Hults
Forrest Jones
Dennis Mchalak
James Mitchell, Jr.

David Nickels
Luke Schmidt
Donna Smith
James Waters
Devin Wulff

BASS

Tyler Apffel
Thomas Baucom
J. Laing Bowles
Cyril Draffin
Everett Goldstein
Bill Gregory
Paul Grosvenor

Michael Hamaide
Justice Jones
Terry Lee
Andrew Markle
Mark Moverman
Charles Petty
Price Roe

Howard Spendelow
John Stewart
J. Mills Williams
Christopher Wroten
Ethan Zorack-Greene

Please join us for
Holy Week Worship

Maundy Thursday
April 17, 7:00 p.m. Sanctuary

Marking our Lord's last supper with his
disciples and his loving example to them
of true servanthood.

Good Friday
April 18, 7:00 p.m. Sanctuary

Meditations in word and music
on the seven last words of Christ
on the cross.

Easter Sunday
APRIL 20

8:30, 10, & 11:30 a.m.

Worship in the Sanctuary with exhilarating hymns and anthems featuring
the Chancel Choir and Soloists, Brass, Organ, and Timpani.

*Easter Egg hunt for the children in the Fountain Garden after the 8:30 service
and on the playground after the 10:00 service.*

Childcare available all morning in the main church building for children up to age 4.

NATIONAL PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH
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