



SUNDAY
MARCH 30, 2025
7:30 PM



Ein Deutsches Requiem

Brahms German Requiem

Artistic Director **Edette Gagné**

In Collaboration with **The Richmond Orchestra
and Chorus Association**

THE ORPHEUM
601 SMITHE ST. • VANCOUVER, BC

Message from the Artistic Director - Edette Gagné

“A German Requiem, to Words of the Holy Scriptures”

Ein deutsches Requiem, nach Worten der heiligen Schrift (opus 45) – composed by Johannes Brahms between 1865 and 1868 is unique in its choice of lyrics, humanist approach and overall emotional arc. Most requiem masses set the same traditional collection of liturgical Latin texts to music – Brahms intentionally chose and organized very specific Lutheran Bible texts which trace a trajectory from suffering to acceptance.

This is a deeply personal composition for Brahms. He penned the first two movements shortly after his beloved mother died, which he immediately sent to his dear friend Clara Schumann. Brahms composed this Requiem midway through his seemingly tortured process of composing his First Symphony (feeling ever overshadowed by the symphonies of Beethoven). During this time, Brahms also broke off his engagement to a woman whom he later described as the last love of his life. Suffering upon suffering...

The final version of Brahms' Requiem speaks to listeners on many levels: a journey from personal loss and suffering to acceptance, and a broader humanist message beyond the liturgical texts. Interesting to note that Brahms' use of the word “German” refers only to his choice of text. He told the music director of the Bremen Cathedral that he would have gladly called the work “ein menschliches Requiem” – a human Requiem.

Musically, Brahms used highly descriptive tempo/style markings and removed metronome markings, to allow the music to speak more intimately through whomever is performing the work. Comprised of seven movements, it is both the longest of Brahms' compositions and his largest ensemble work.

Today's performance leans even more into the intimacy and personal nature of this iconic work for two reasons. Firstly, we will be performing with a more intimate choir and orchestra than the usual large, “professional” performance. Secondly, the musicians collaborating in this performance are amateurs who create music for the love of making music alone. The Orpheum is the perfect setting and acoustic for audience members to allow themselves to be immersed in the deep power of Brahms' Requiem.

It is a huge privilege to bring this iconic work to life here in the Orpheum. Deep gratitude to Brigid Coult of the Richmond Orchestra and Chorus Association for inviting Vivaldi Chamber Choir to collaborate in this endeavour. Thanks to James Malmberg for building and preparing this incredible orchestra, with whom we have had the pleasure to sing. There is nothing like singing with a full orchestra—nothing.

The first and last word sung in the Requiem captures everything we feel performing for you today: *selig* – blessed.

Johannes Brahms (1833–1897)

Ein deutsches Requiem, nach Worten der heiligen Schrift, Op 45

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



Vivaldi Chamber Choir, Edette Gagné, Artistic Director
Richmond Orchestra and Chorus Association, Brigid Coult, Chorus Conductor
Chloé Hurst, Soprano Soloist
Aaron Durand, Baritone Soloist



We gratefully acknowledge the assistance of

Vancouver Civic Theatres
The Orpheum
The Deux Mille Foundation

in presenting this programme tonight.

The Performers

Edette Gagné

Vivaldi Chamber Choir, Artistic Director

Edette Gagné is a visionary leader who inspires others to go beyond what they thought were limitations, in order to achieve amazing results.

In her work around the globe with professionals and amateurs, Edette creates communities where people feel valued, included and safe to take chances, so that they can grow, flourish and be their best.

Edette increases sponsorship and audience growth; historically by up to 300%, by connecting with and engaging community support for performing arts organizations. As a strategist, Edette works with boards and stake-holders to find flexible, resilient ways to re-invent their organizations when facing challenges; so that they are able to create responses that are flexible and adaptive to needs as they emerge.

As an artistic director, stage director and music director of orchestras, choirs, opera and musical theatre groups, Edette champions creative programming, including staging and performances that captivate artists and audiences alike. She is known for inspiring performers to rise above the ordinary.

Throughout her career creating international touring shows, facilitating grand scale events on location, and transforming performing ensembles to realize their potential, Edette brings a deep work ethic and a commitment to creative collaboration.

Edette resides in Vancouver BC with her wife Melisa and several wonderful rescued animals. She recharges her batteries with cooking, mindfulness, gratitude and reading.



Photo: Michelle Diamond –
Diamond's Edge Photography



Chloé Hurst Soprano Soloist

Chloé Hurst is an active singer, pianist and teacher in Vancouver. Hailed by Opera Canada as having “enviable clarity and precision,” and having “a bright soprano, wide range and even pitch,” her talent has taken her around the world. Chloé started her formal training in music at the age of

three as a pianist and it was not until university that she started to pursue her passion for singing. She completed both an undergrad and master's degree in opera performance at The University of British Columbia. Chloé has had the privilege of performing across North America, Europe and China in operas, concerts and competitions, including being a finalist on the popular Chinese television program, *Xing Guang Da Dao*. Past operatic roles include Adina (*L'elisir D'amore*), Micaëla (*Carmen*), Mimì (*La Bohème*) and many more. Chloé often gives solo recitals in Italy and won first prize in the Canadian Division of the 28th World Music Competition. As a versatile performer, Chloé has also sung various works with orchestra such as Handel's *Messiah*, Berlioz's *Les Nuit D'été* and Vaughan Williams' *A Sea Symphony*. Alongside performing, Chloé is on faculty at the Vancouver Academy of Music teaching theory, piano and voice and is the head of the Early Music Education Department.

Aaron Durand Baritone Soloist



Aaron Durand (he/him) is known for three things: he sings, grows a good beard, and knows a little about a lot. He's forever a student of stories well told, whether in song and verse or prose and podcast. A love of opera has gifted Aaron with travels across the world, singing on stages from St. John's to Chengdu, Prague to Penticton.

Recent highlights include joining his alma mater as Pandolfe in UBC Opera's production of *Cendrillon* and starring as Frank in Alberta Vocal Art's inaugural production of *Die Fledermaus*. Life highlights include founding an irreverent classical music group in Toronto (Tongue in Cheek Productions), performing in *The Overcoat* with Tapestry Opera, publishing a book of poetry, and singing Debussy's "Beau Soir" to the bartender and three delighted Japanese salarymen in a Kyoto izakaya.

Aaron is widely known for his easygoing nature, “beautiful, fluid baritone” (Globe & Mail), and “sense of the comical and the ludicrous” (Calgary Herald). He holds a Master's degree in Opera Performance from UBC, with a specialist understanding of opera and art song cultivated under baritone Peter Barcza, director Nancy Hermiston, and Rena Sharon, one of Canada's premiere collaborative artists. He dwells in the territory of the Skwxwú7mesh peoples, and is grateful for the chance to tell stories there.



Brigid Coult
ROCA, Chorus Conductor

Brigid Coult trained and worked in England until coming to Canada in 1982. She has been the conductor of Richmond Chorus since 1994, and in her hands the Chorus has grown both in numbers and musicianship. She retired last year having

served as Director of Music at St. Mary's Kerrisdale Anglican Church for 20 years, and she has also served on diocesan and national church committees. She has been a member of Canada's award-winning women's choir, Elektra.

Ms. Coult was President of the British Columbia Choral Federation (BCCF) for 13 years, and has just retired from an 18-year term as its Project Manager; she has served on the Board of Choral Canada as BC representative and as President. She was involved in the planning and execution of the World Symposium on Choral Music (III) held here in Vancouver in 1993, the World of Children's Choirs – 2001, and the joint CC/BCCF ChorPodium conference, held in Victoria in 2006. She has been an adjudicator and choral clinician for festivals throughout BC and in retirement continues as a devoted volunteer and supporter of Richmond's Cat Sanctuary!



Jeon Mok
ROCA, Accompanist

Jeon is a pianist with extensive experience, currently collaborating on a regular basis with nearly a dozen choirs across various levels, ranging from community and secondary schools to university. Renowned for his expertise in choral accompaniment, Jeon

brings a unique blend of precision, sensitivity, and artistry to his performances. His versatile repertoire and musicality has earned him a reputation as a sought-after accompanist in the choral community. Jeon holds a Bachelor of Music from the University of British Columbia.

James Malmberg
ROCA, Artistic Director

A graduate of the UBC School of Music, James Malmberg enjoys a career of teaching, performing, and conducting. He is the Artistic Director of the Valhalla Suzuki Institute in New Denver BC and has adjudicated at festivals in Langley, Powell River, Sechelt, and the Kootenays. He has performed with the National Youth Orchestra, Lions Gate Sinfonia, the Orca String Quartet, Vancouver Opera, Vancouver Island Symphony, and the Kamloops and Okanagan Symphonies.

Since graduating from UBC, he has continued his studies in Suzuki Pedagogy in Arizona, California, Oregon, and Edmonton and has spent his summers teaching at the Yukon Summer Music Festival, the UBC Summer Music Institute, and the Edmonton Suzuki Institute. He was a conductor with the Richmond Delta Youth Orchestra for many years and was appointed the conductor of the Richmond Orchestra in 2007 after being concertmaster for several years. His work with youth is his most satisfying accomplishment, both through his private violin studio, as well as having featured over 50 young soloists through the Rising Stars concert series and reaching thousands of elementary school children through the education outreach program of ROCA.



Karen Lee-Morlang
Vivaldi Chamber Choir,
Collaborative Pianist

An award-winning performer, educator and producer, Karen Lee-Morlang has been lauded as "funny, brainy and creative." After specializing in art song and chamber music for her post-graduate degree from the University of British Columbia, she then taught as a Sessional Lecturer at UBC while continuing her own education and performing in different parts of North America, Europe and Asia. Karen has been featured at the Vancouver International Jazz Festival, MusicFest Vancouver, the World Peace Forum, Women's Worlds Conference, the Vancouver Folk Festival and has been broadcast on CBC Radio.

Karen enjoys collaborating with a number of local choirs and is the Music Director at St. Francis-in-the-Wood Church in West Vancouver, where she leads the enthusiastic Church Choir and the Coast Mountain Men's Chorus.



Vivaldi Chamber Choir
Edette Gagné, Artistic Director
Karen Lee-Morlang, Collaborative Pianist

| Soprano | Alto | Tenor |
|---------------------|--------------------|--------------------|
| Yasmine Bia | Michelle Arduini | Jeff Carmichael |
| Susie Britnell | Margaret Archibald | Matt Emery |
| Sophia Chan | Dinah Ayre* | Steve Froese* |
| Arianna Cheveldave | Ros Coulson | Matthew Hunter† |
| Fanny Dupont | Sarah Ebert | David Kaplan |
| Winnie Gibson | Bev Ferguson | Curtis Umpherville |
| Denise Gilbert | Joan Fitzpatrick | Jorge Vega |
| Sarah Lamont | Angel Liu | |
| Sarah Little | Samantha Merz | Bass |
| Erika Pryer* | Freda Miller | Tyler Enns |
| Andrea Teigelhoefer | Karen Millard | Jack Foster* |
| Selma van Halden | Eve Munns | Al Kvern |
| | Cheryl Thomas† | Aaron Lau |
| | | Michael Loo |
| | | David Millard† |
| | | Mike Millard |
| | | Peter Munns |

Richmond Chorus
Brigid Coult, Chorus Conductor
Jeon Mok, Accompanist

| Soprano | Alto | Tenor |
|-----------------------|----------------------|------------------|
| Adele Armstrong | Helen Andow | Paul Chan§ |
| Doris Bruce† | Cindy Bartrop | Bruce Lysack§ |
| Michelle Chan | AnneMarie Brodeur | Don Moir |
| Alison Cole | Bernadette Chong | Alex Schmidt |
| Gabby Cometa | Jennifer Dufour | Max Schmidt |
| Rachel Eaton | Sally Fitzpatrick | Hyo Shim§ |
| Mary Hanson | Laura Herrera | Chris Skipper |
| Kathy Hori | Kate Howie | Graeme Stager |
| Shelly Jetzer | Pat Koepke | |
| Amy Koop | Lavonne Koskitalo | Bass |
| Roxanne Koop | Karen Lachance | Bernie Barrett |
| Kelsey Lamb | Linda Lysack | Charles Cohen |
| Anne Parker | Liz MacDonald | Brian Dobbin |
| Rowena Silver Bridson | Letty Mills | Jeremy Gomersall |
| Siân Smith | Anne Norman | Don Harder§ |
| Susan Stolberg | Elizabeth Oh | Richard Hobson |
| Karen Tardif | Dawn Ross§ | Thomas Kind |
| | Nancy Ross | Bill Meyer |
| | Lea Starr | Jordan Price |
| | Monica Teng | Victor Schmid |
| | Genny Trigo-Gonzalez | Will Wendowsky |

* Section Lead † On leave § Guest

Richmond Orchestra
James Malmberg, Artistic Director

Violin 1

Larisa Lebeda
Angus Yuen
Clare Palmer
Michelle Poon
Hiron Poon
Tony Tse
Kaitlyn Chui
Jocelyn Chui (UBC)
Julia Lattimer
Christie Watts (UBC)

Violin 2

Marcus Chiu
Robin Anderson
Bernhard Zinkhofer
Linda Mei
Jane Zhao
Tabitha Grass
Ghazal Vahdati
Yuika Ravindran (UBC)
Matteya Lee (UBC)

Viola

Jennifer Middleton
Rook Bridson
Robin Hammond
Stacey Mennie
Deirdre Rogers
Cat DeMello (UBC)
Oliver Hedzelek (UBC)

Cello

Leah Rowe
Pearl Chang
Amy Hung
Greg Warren
Evan Bates
David Au Yeung

Bass

Wiktor Lebeda
Alexander Holliday
Tom Angelus
Marlena Loewen (UBC)

Flute

Dragana Hajduk
Nina Hajduk
Harold Kwan

Oboe

Deborah Tin Tun
Shannon Long

Clarinet

Annette Wood
Susan Yatsuda

Bassoon

Ron Schubank
Paul Kuyt

Horn

Susi Hobbs
Malcolm Francis
Nick Bartlett
Albert Wu

Trumpet

Bob Lilly
Owen Rusticus

Trombone

Mareike Leider
Eugene Khandyshko
Chris Addison

Tuba

Carrie Chapman

Harp

Miya Otake

Organ (Richmond performance)
Jeon Mok

Timpani

Evan MacNamara



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Text and Translation

I. Selig sind, die da Leid tragen

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

Blessed are they who mourn; for they shall be comforted.

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

Those who sow in tears shall reap with joy. They go out weeping, bearing the seed for sowing, and return in joy, bringing their sheaves.

II. Denn alles Fleisch, es ist wie Gras

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

For all flesh is like grass and all human glory like the flowers of grass. The grass withers, and the flowers fall away.

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.

Be patient therefore, beloved brethren, until the coming of the Lord. Behold, the farmer waits for the precious fruit of the earth, being patient over it until it receives the morning and evening rains.

Aber des Herrn Wort bleibet in Ewigkeit.

But the word of the Lord abides for ever.

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

Those whom the Lord has redeemed shall return, and come to Zion with exultation; everlasting joy shall be upon their heads: they shall gain joy and gladness, and pain and sighing shall flee away.

III. Herr, lehre doch mich

Herr, lehre doch mich, daß ein Ende mit mir haben muß, und mein Leben ein Ziel hat, und ich davon muß. Siehe, meine Tage sind einer Hand breit vor dir, und mein Leben ist wie nichts vor dir.

Lord, let me know my end, and the number of my days; show me how fleeting my life is. Behold, my days are but a handbreadth to you; and my lifetime is as nothing before you.

Ach, wie 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 auf dich.

Ah! how negligible are all people, who yet live so certain of themselves. They go forth like a phantom and make for themselves much vain turmoil; they heap up riches and do not know who will take hold of them. And now, Lord, for what do I wait? My hope is in you.

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

The souls of the righteous are in the hand of God, and no torment shall touch them.

IV. Wie lieblich sind deine Wohnungen

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.

How lovely are your dwelling-places, O Lord of hosts! My soul longs and yearns for the courts of the Lord; my flesh and my soul rejoice in the living God. Blessed are those who dwell in your house; they shall praise you eternally.

V. Ihr habt nun Traurigkeit

Solist:

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

Sehet mich an: Ich habe eine kleine Zeit Mühe und Arbeit gehabt und habe großen Trost funden.

Chor:

Ich will euch trösten, wie Einen seine Mutter tröstet.

Soloist:

For now, you have sorrow, but I will see you again and your hearts will rejoice, and no one will take your joy from you.

Look upon me: I have laboured and toiled for a little while, yet I have found much consolation.

Chorus:

I will comfort you, like one whom a mother comforts.

VI. Denn wir haben hie keine bleibende Statt

Denn wir haben hie keine bleibende Statt, sondern die zukünftige suchen wir.

Siehe, ich sage euch ein Geheimnis: Wir werden nicht 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 die 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, denn du hast alle Dinge geschaffen, und durch deinen Willen haben sie das Wesen und sind geschaffen.

For here we do not have an enduring place, but we look forward to the one which is to come.

See! I tell you a secret. We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed, and that suddenly, in the blink of eye, at the time of the last trumpet. For the trumpet will sound, and the dead will be raised imperishable, and we shall be changed.

Then shall come to pass the saying that is written: Death is swallowed up in victory. Death, where is your sting? Hell, where is your victory?

Lord, you are worthy to receive praise and honour and power, for you made all things, and by your will they were created and have their being.

VII. Selig sind die Toten

Selig sind die Toten, die in dem Herrn sterben, von nun an. Ja, der Geist spricht, daß sie ruhen von ihrer Arbeit; denn ihre Werke folgen ihnen nach.

Blessed are the dead who die in the Lord from this time forward. Blessed indeed, says the Spirit, that they may rest from their labours; for their deeds shall follow them.

Translated by David Millard

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Vivaldi Chamber Choir



Photo: Michelle Diamond - Diamond's Edge Photography

Vivaldi Chamber Choir is a well-established, not-for-profit, auditioned community choir of 35 voices that has been delivering quality choral music for over 30 years. It is governed by a volunteer Board of Directors elected from the membership, and received its incorporation under the BC Society Act in 1991 as "The Greater Vancouver Vivaldi Chamber Choir Society".

Vivaldi Chamber Choir's repertoire ranges from early music to contemporary, presented *a cappella* or with piano, organ, small instrumental ensemble or orchestra, and frequently with vocal soloists. The choir performs in a wide range of languages and often includes works by BC arrangers and composers. The choral season runs from September to June with weekly rehearsals at St. Titus Anglican Church in Vancouver, to prepare a total of three programs per season, as well as charitable outreach concerts throughout the season to connect with the community at large.

Vivaldi Chamber Choir has been under the Artistic Direction of Edette Gagné for 10 seasons, and they are thrilled to be celebrating her 10th season with this collaborative performance of Brahms' German Requiem with The Richmond Orchestra and Chorus Association!

We would also like to express our huge gratitude to the members of the choir's volunteer board. This performance would not be possible without their time, dedication and hard work!

Join us for:



Shall We Dance?

Sunday, June 22, 2025 at 3:00 PM

**Pacific Spirit United Church
2195 W 45th Ave., Vancouver, BC**

www.vivaldichoir.org

Richmond Orchestra and Chorus Association (ROCA)



In 1986, a small group of Richmond musicians had the desire to make music for their community and the **Richmond Orchestra & Chorus** was formed. Since then, the organization has grown to almost 100 members, all committed to providing an opportunity for musicians to share the joy of music in practice and performance. The talented instrumentalists and singers present a variety of music throughout the season, from the beauty of the classics, through seasonal traditions and the uplifting passion of sacred and spiritual, to the delights of folk, jazz, modern and show tunes. Recent major works include Brahms' *German Requiem*, Handel's *Messiah* and Mozart's *Requiem*. Members range in age from high school students to seniors; they come from all walks of life, and welcome the opportunity to share their love of music with



RICHMOND
ORCHESTRA
& CHORUS
ASSOCIATION



Vivaldi Chamber Choir

BRAHMS: *A German Requiem*

Saturday, April 5, 2025 — 7:30 pm

Brigid Coult, ROCA Chorus Conductor

Chloé Hurst, Soprano Soloist

Aaron Durand, Baritone Soloist

Fraserview MB Church

11295 Mellis Drive, Richmond

Tickets available now at the website below, or contact us to reserve.

This will be the second of two performances of this wonderful work. The first will take place in Vancouver's Orpheum Theatre on March 30, and will be directed by Vivaldi Chamber Choir's conductor, Edette Gagné.

roca@roca.ca — 604-276-2747

ROCA.CA

About the Work

Johannes Brahms was born May 7, 1833, in Hamburg and died April 3, 1897, in Vienna. Our view of him is coloured by the pictures that are left of a middle-aged man: stout, be-whiskered and solemn. We know of his music through the lens of the four magnificent symphonies and three concertos, of his dense and intricate chamber music, of his technique-stretching piano repertoire. This music, we think, is serious stuff, for REAL musicians. But we need also to listen to his lovely folk-song settings and his frivolous Viennese waltzes – this was a many-faceted man who enjoyed his beer and the dance music of his adopted city, as well as creating music of great depth and feeling.

Today's work, the *Deutsches Requiem*, was begun in 1866, when he was only 33, and performed 2 years later in Bremen. It pre-dates all four of the symphonies; of his major works, only the first piano concerto precedes it. When he planned it, Brahms likely had in mind his friend and mentor, Robert Schumann, whom he met in 1853, and who introduced him as a genius to a wide circle of musicians. Schumann had a breakdown in 1855 and died two years later in an insane asylum; Brahms maintained a profound romantic but platonic passion for the widow, Clara Schumann, and trusted her musical judgement in many things.

The *Requiem* played a large part in establishing Brahms's reputation with the musical elite. Romantic music of the period was divided into two camps – those who favoured the excesses of Wagner and Liszt, and those who favoured the traditional music formalities. Brahms met Wagner in the mid-1860s, but their opposing stances precluded anything like friendship, and the successes of the *Deutsches Requiem* and the *St Anthony Variations* established Brahms firmly with the traditionalists.

The work is sacred but non-liturgical. Brahms assembled the libretto to *Ein deutsches Requiem* himself. In contrast to the traditional Roman Catholic requiem mass, which employs a standardized text in Latin, *Ein deutsches Requiem* derives its text from the German Lutheran Bible. His first known use of the title *A German Requiem* was in an 1865 letter to Clara Schumann in which he wrote that he intended for the piece to be "a sort of German Requiem". Brahms was quite moved when he found out years later that Robert Schumann had planned a work of the same name. *German* refers primarily to the language rather than the intended audience; Brahms told the director of music at Bremen cathedral that he would have gladly called the work *A Human Requiem*.

Although the Requiem Mass in the Roman Catholic liturgy begins with prayers for the dead ("Grant them eternal

rest, O Lord"), *Ein deutsches Requiem* emphasizes comforting the living, beginning with the text "Blessed are they that mourn: for they shall be comforted." A comparable sacred, humanist worldview persists through the work.

The seven movements of the Requiem form an arch. The opening movement: "Blessed are they that mourn, for they shall be comforted" is echoed in the closing moments of the work, as the chorus reminds us that the dead are indeed blessed. At the centre of the Requiem's arch is the fourth movement, "*Wie lieblich sind deine Wohnungen*" ("How lovely are thy dwelling places"), which is perhaps the most beloved part of the work, and the only one that is sometimes performed alone. Here Brahms offers a vision not of anguish or torment, but of beauty and security, taken from Psalm 84. Brahms sets these words to a lilting theme and accompaniment in triple meter that most resemble a Viennese waltz. On either side of this central point, in the third movement and the fifth Brahms introduces the soloists; the third opens with the baritone reminding us of our mortality, and this movement culminates with an expansive and positively Handelian fugue, at the words "*Der Gerechten Seelen sind in Gottes Hand*" ("But the souls of the righteous are in the hand of God"). The fugue is underpinned for 36 measures by a continuous pedal point on D played by the trombones, tuba, and timpani—an effect that was widely noted, and almost as widely condemned, at the first performance of this movement in Vienna, especially because the percussionist managed to play *fortissimo* and drown out most of the other players. The soprano sings in the fifth movement; this was an addition to the first version of the Requiem Brahms wrote, and as the chorus murmurs of how one is comforted by a mother, it is easy to believe that Brahms had his own mother in mind – she died in 1865.

Of the remaining two movements, the second presents a sort of funeral march in triple time, again reminding us that our lives are transitory, but then balancing it with a four-square chorus reminding us that God's word remains for ever. The sixth also begins in foreboding, moves through the last trumpet (the trombone, in German!) summoning the dead to resurrection, followed by a majestic fugue of praise.

"Blessed", "comfort", "peace" are all words of vital importance in this work, and they come together in serenity at the end. There is a particular poetic synergy every time we sing "*ruhen*", which means to rest. As written by Brahms these phrases suggest the sweetest sleep imaginable. And the long phrases "*Von nun an*" meaning "from now on" suggests a confirmation that we may keep what has just been promised.

Brigid Coult



VIVALDI CHAMBER CHOIR

Shall We Dance?

Sunday, June 22, 2025 @ 3:00 PM

Pacific Spirit United Church

2195 W 45th Ave., Vancouver, BC

www.vivaldichoir.org

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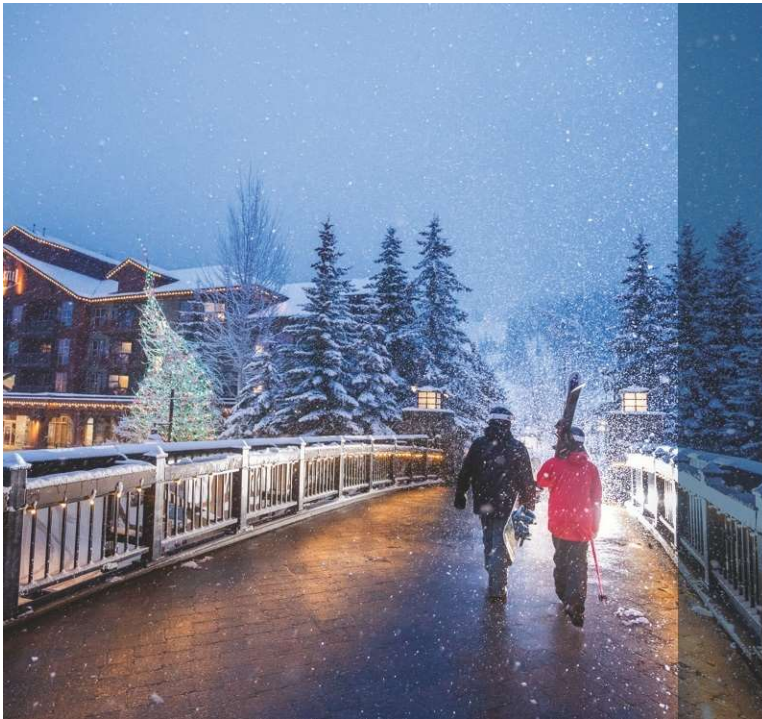
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The opening of movement IV. Wie lieblich sind deine Wohnungen
from Brahms' arrangement of the Requiem for piano 4 hands.