

# **BRAHMS REQUIEM**

The background of the image is a stylized, abstract composition. On the left side, there are teal-colored, petal-like shapes radiating from the bottom left corner. On the right side, there are orange-colored, petal-like shapes radiating from the top right corner. The two colors meet in the center, creating a dark, almost black, vertical band. The overall effect is a dramatic, high-contrast background for the text.

# Ein deutsches Requiem

by Johannes Brahms

May 20, 2023, 3pm  
Union Church of Cupertino

- I. “Selig sind, die da Leid tragen”
- II. “Denn alles Fleisch, es ist wie Gras”
- III. “Herr, lehre doch mich”  
*Kar Epker, baritone*
- IV. “Wie lieblich sind deine Wohnungen”
- V. “Ihr habt nun Traurigkeit”  
*Gayatri Venkatesan, soprano*
- VI. “Denn wir haben hie keine bleibende Statt”  
*Jörg Barfurth, baritone*
- VII. “Selig sind die Toten”

*Ensemble Continuo Mountain View*

Christopher Pluntke, conductor

Elbert Gong and Shannon Wang, piano

*Soprano*

Frauke Uhlenbruch  
Helene Vik  
Madi Kern  
Ming Zhu  
Vicky Lin

*Tenor*

David Gatwood  
Dylan Zhou  
Josue Rosales  
Kar Epker  
Will Culhane

*Alto*

Caroline Lui  
Helen Keeney  
Jenny Wong  
Robyn Peters  
Sonya Mollinger  
Sophia Bui

*Bass*

Conroy Jinq  
Danny Neumann  
Dave Peters  
Felix Sun  
Jörg Barfurth  
Ryan Duncan  
Simeon Anfinrud

## Welcome from Ensemble Continuo

We are so glad you have joined us for our inaugural public performance!

We are a classical choir based in Mountain View with a passion for exploring the choral repertoire from Renaissance to contemporary, including, of course, the classical choir masterworks: Bach, Handel, Mozart, and today, Johannes Brahms.

Performing Brahms' Requiem is a bucket list item for many musicians. No wonder: it is a riveting piece. It challenges you thematically and artistically, it challenges your stamina as a singer. It is rousing and delicate, heartbreaking but ultimately consoling and full of hope.

We hope you will enjoy our performance today as much as we have enjoyed preparing for it. We cannot overstate how excited we are to sing live, in a beautiful space, after an era of Zoom concerts and masked rehearsals in parking garages. Our sincerest thanks to Union Church of Cupertino for hosting our first public concert. We hope you take a moment today to appreciate the space and the act of shared music making.

## About today's performance

Duration: ca. 1 hour. No intermission.

Please silence your mobile devices for the duration of the concert.

We are performing the arrangement of the requiem for choir, soloists, and piano four-hands.

Following the concert, please join us for a small reception in the garden. Thanks to Dana Street Roastery in Mountain View for graciously providing beverages.

## About the Requiem

Johannes Brahms (1833-1897) composed *Ein deutsches Requiem* between 1865 and 1868. As opposed to other famous musical requiems, Brahms' does not follow the structure of the Latin requiem mass. Rather, it is a musical setting of a collection of Bible verses in German, selected by Brahms himself. (Hence, a 'German' requiem.) Brahms may have been inspired to compose the piece by the deaths of his mother and of his friend Robert Schumann, but he did not speak much about such matters, so his inspiration is not certain.

The piece originally comprised only 6 movements (excluding the fifth movement). The full version with 7 movements premiered with the Leipzig Gewandhaus Orchestra and Chorus on 18 February 1869. Around this time, Brahms published an arrangement for piano 4-hands, so that the piece could be performed in people's homes.

The work exhibits structural symmetry around the fourth movement. Movements 1 and 7 are tranquil and share the F major *Selig sind* motif. Movements 2 and 6 begin solemnly and then transition into rousing fugal material. Movements 3 and 5 begin with solo voices. Movement 4, the shortest movement, is a brief oasis of calm. Thematically, each movement begins on a note of despair or sadness but ends with a sense of hope, solace, or even triumph.

## Text and Translation

### Ein deutsches Requiem

#### 1.

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

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.

#### 2.

Denn alles Fleisch, es ist wie 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.

Aber des Herrn Wort bleibet in Ewigkeit.

Die Erlöseten des Herrn werden wiederkommen 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.

### A German Requiem

#### 1.

Blessed are they that mourn: for they shall be comforted. (Matthew 5:4)

They that sow in tears shall reap in joy.

They that go forth and weep, bearing precious seed, shall doubtless come again with rejoicing, bringing their sheaves with them. (Psalm 126:5-6)

#### 2.

For all flesh is as grass, and all the glory of man as the flower of grass. The grass withers, and the flower thereof falleth away. (1 Peter 1:24)

Be patient therefore, brethren, unto the coming of the Lord. Behold, the husbandman waiteth for the precious fruit of the earth, and has long patience for it, until he receive the morning and evening rain. (James 5:7)

But the word of the Lord endureth for ever. (1 Peter 1:25)

And the ransomed of the Lord shall return, and come to Zion with songs and everlasting joy upon their heads: they shall obtain joy and gladness, and sorrow and sighing shall flee away. (Isaiah 35:10)

**3.**

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.

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.

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

**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.

**5.**

Ihr habt nun Traurigkeit; aber ich will euch wiedersehen 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.

Ich will euch trösten, wie einen seine Mutter tröstet.

**3.**

Lord, make me to know mine end, and the measure of my days, what it is: that I may know how frail I am.

Behold, thou hast made my days as an handbreadth; and mine age is as nothing before thee.

Surely every man walks in a vain show: surely they are disquieted in vain: he heaps up riches, and knows not who shall gather them.

And now, Lord, what wait I for? My hope is in thee. (Psalm 39:4-7)

The souls of the righteous are in the hand of God and there shall no torment touch them. (Wisdom of Solomon 3:1)

**4.**

How lovely are thy tabernacles, O Lord of hosts!

My soul longs, yea, even faints for the courts of the Lord: my heart and my flesh cries out for the living God.

Blessed are they that dwell in thy house: they will always be praising thee. (Psalm 84:1.2.4)

**5.**

And ye now therefore have sorrow: but I will see you again, and your heart shall rejoice, and your joy no man taketh from you. (John 16:22)

Behold with your eyes, how that I have but little labour, and have gotten unto me much rest. (Ecclesiasticus 51:27)

As one whom his mother comforts, so will I comfort you. (Isaiah 66:13)

6.

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  
letzen 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 erschaffen,  
und durch deinen Willen haben sie das Wesen  
und sind geschaffen.

7.

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

6.

For here have we no continuing city, but we  
seek one to come. (Hebrews 13:14)

Behold, I show you a mystery: we shall not all  
sleep, but we shall all be changed, in a  
moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last  
trump: for the trumpet shall sound, and the  
dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall  
be changed.

Then shall be brought to pass the saying that is  
written, Death is swallowed up in victory. O  
death, where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy  
victory?

(1 Corinthians 15:51–52.54–55)

Thou art worthy, o Lord, to receive glory and  
honour and power: for thou hast created all  
things, and for thy pleasure they are and were  
created. (Revelation 4:11)

7.

Blessed are the dead, which die in the Lord,  
from henceforth. Yea, says the Spirit, that they  
may rest from their labours; and their works do  
follow them. (Revelation 14:13)

*The English translation above is largely the King James Version, slightly adapted by Philip Legge. Source:*

[www.cpd.org](http://www.cpd.org)

## Upcoming concerts

July 2, 2023: Stanford Memorial Church

A selection of shorter pieces: “Agnus Dei” by Samuel Barber, “Earth Song” by Frank Ticheli, “Stars” by Ēriks Ešenvalds, and others, tbd.

December 2, 2023: Union Church of Cupertino

Program tbd.

If you would like to sing with us, get in touch via our website ([ensemble-continuo.com](https://ensemble-continuo.com)) or come say hi after the concert! We rehearse on Tuesdays, 5:30-7:00 pm, in Mountain View.

Follow us on Instagram ([@ensemblecontinuo](https://www.instagram.com/ensemblecontinuo)) and Facebook ([Ensemble-Continuo-Mountain-View](https://www.facebook.com/Ensemble-Continuo-Mountain-View)). View our past recordings on our [YouTube channel](#), including Frank Ticheli’s [Earth Song](#) (in a parking garage!) and Poulenc’s *Quatre Motets pour le Temps de Noël*.