

Choir of the West

Sunday, April 21, 2024, at 7:30pm
Blessed Sacrament Church, Seattle

Tuesday, April 23, 2024, at 7:30pm
Lagerquist Concert Hall, Mary Baker Russell Music Center

Pacific Lutheran University
The College of Professional Studies and School of Music, Theatre & Dance present

Choir of the West

Brian Galante, *conductor*

with

Amy Boers and Oksana Ejokina, *piano*

Sunday, April 21, 2024, at 7:30pm
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Welcome to tonight's performance.

Please disable the audible signal on all watches and cellular phones for the duration of the concert.
Use of cameras, recording equipment and all digital devices is not permitted.

PROGRAM

Ein Deutsches Requiem, op. 45 **Johannes Brahms (1833-1897)**

Emily Morse (April 21) or Ellie O'Brien (April 23), *soprano*
Dominic Walker (April 21) or Jack Burrows (April 23), *baritone*

I. Chorus [Matthew 5:4; Psalms 126:5-6]

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

*Blessed are those 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 with tears will reap with joy.
They go forth and weep, bearing precious seeds,
and return rejoicing, bringing their sheaves.*

II. Chorus [1 Peter 1:24; James 5:7,8a; 1 Peter 1:25; Isaiah 35:10]

Denn alles Fleisch 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 the grass,
and all the magnificence of mortals
is like the flowers of the grass.
The grass has withered, and the flower fallen 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.

*So now be patient, dear friends,
until the life hereafter.
Behold, a husbandman waits
for the precious fruit of the earth
and is patient, until he receives
the morning rain and evening rain.*

Aber des Herrn Wort bleibet in Ewigkeit.

But the word of the Lord endures forever.

Die Erlöseten des Herrn werden wieder kommen,
und gen Zion kommen mit Jauchzen;
ewige Freude wird über ihrem Haupte sein;

*The redeemed of the Lord will return,
and come to Zion with shouts of joy;
eternal joy will be upon their heads,*

Freude und Wonne werden sie ergreifen
und Schmerz und Seufzen wird weg müssen.

*joy and delight will overcome them
and sorry and sighing will have to depart.*

III. Baritone and Chorus [Psalm 39:4-7; Wisdom of Solomon 3:1]

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.

*Lord, teach me, that I must have an end,
and that my life has an end, and that I must pass away.
Behold, my days here are but a handbreadth before you,
and my life is nothing before you.
Ah, how insignificant all mortals are,
and yet they live so confidently.
They go about like a phantom,
and create so much vain unrest;
they gather things and do not know who will receive them.
Now, Lord, in whom shall I find consolation?
I trust in you.*

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

*The souls of the righteous are in God's hands,
and no torment touches them.*

IV. Chorus [Psalm 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.

*How lovely are your dwellings, O Lord of Hosts!
My soul yearns and longs
for the courts of the Lord;
my body and soul rejoice in the living God.
Blessed are those who dwell in your house,
those who praise you forever more.*

V. Soprano and Chorus [John 16:22; Isaiah 66:13; Ecclesiasticus 51:35]

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

*You now have sorrow; but I want to see you again,
and your heart shall rejoice,
and no one shall take your joy from you.*

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

*Look at me: I have briefly toiled
and labored, and now have found great comfort.*

Ich will euch trösten, wie einen seine Mutter tröstet.

I want to comfort you, as one is comforted by his mother.

VI. Baritone and Chorus [Hebrews 13:14; 1 Corinthians 15:51,52,54,55; Revelation 4:11]

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

*For here we have no permanent place,
but we seek the one to come.*

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?

*Behold, I tell you a mystery:
we will not all fall asleep,
we will however all be transformed,
suddenly, in an instant,
at the time of the last trumpet.
For the trumpet shall sound,
and the dead shall rise up incorruptible,
and we will be transformed.
Then will be fulfilled, the word that is written:
"Death is swallowed up in victory.
Death, where is your sting?
Hell, where is your victory?"*

Herr, du bist würdig zu nehmen Preis
und Ehre und Kraft, denn du hast alle Dinge geschaffen,

*Lord, you are worthy to receive praise
and honor and might, for you have created all things,*

und durch deinen Willen haben sie
das Wesen und sind geschaffen.

*and by your will they have
their being and are created.*

VII. Chorus [Revelation 14:13]

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 now on.
Yea, the Spirit says that they may rest from their labor,
for their works follow them after.*

Program Note

Adapted from John Bawden

For many years Johannes Brahms had been preoccupied with the idea of composing a Requiem, but only in 1866, when he was 33, did he begin serious work on it. It was completed the following year—apart from the fifth movement—which was added later to achieve a more balanced structure. In its incomplete form *Ein Deutsches Requiem* was first heard in Bremen Cathedral on Good Friday, 1868. The final version was performed the following year at Leipzig's famous concert-hall, the Gewandhaus.

Brahms may have written the *Requiem* in memory of his mother, who died in 1865; it is equally possible that he had in mind his great friend and mentor, Robert Schumann, whose madness and tragic death had profoundly affected the young Brahms. The composer himself gave no indication of whose memorial the *Requiem* might be, if indeed it was any one person. As with all great music, the universal message of its vision transcends the circumstances of its conception.

The work's title reflects Brahms' use of the Lutheran Bible rather than the customary Latin one. He compiled the text himself from both Old and New Testaments, and from the Apocrypha. It has little in common with the conventional Requiem Mass and omits the horrors of the Last Judgement—a central feature of the Catholic liturgy—and any final plea for mercy or prayers for the dead. It also makes only a passing reference in the last movement to Christian redemption through the death of Jesus. Not surprisingly, the title of "Requiem" has at times been called into question, but Brahms stated intention was to write a Requiem to comfort the living, not one for the souls of the dead. Consequently the work focuses on faith in the Resurrection rather than fear of the Day of Judgement. Despite its unorthodox text, the *German Requiem* was immediately recognized as a masterpiece of exceptional vision, and it finally confirmed Brahms' reputation as a composer of international stature.

The similarity of the opening and closing movements serves to unify the whole work, while the funeral-march of the second is balanced by the triumphant theme of the resurrection in the towering sixth movement. Similarly, the baritone solo in the third, "Lord, teach me that I must have an end", is paralleled in the fifth by the soprano solo, "You now have sorrow". The lyrical fourth section, "How lovely are your dwellings", is therefore at the heart of the work, framed by the solemnity of the first three movements and the transition from grief to the certainty of comfort in the last three.

This carefully balanced architecture is matched by an equally firm musical structure based on two principal ideas which Brahms skillfully uses in a variety of subtle guises throughout the work. The most important of these occurs at the opening choral entry and consists of the first three notes sung by the sopranos to the words "Blessed are". Brahms uses this musical cell as the main building block of the whole piece, subjecting it to a variety of transformations, including upside-down and back-to-front versions, both of which play as significant a role as the original form. The other important musical idea is a chorale-like melody played at the very beginning. Its most obvious re-appearance is in the second movement, now in a minor key, as an expansive melody sung by the choir in unison. Brahms had recently discovered the cantatas of J.S. Bach, and there seems little doubt that this theme was derived from a very similar chorale melody in Bach's *Cantata No.27*.

The opening movement, the text of which is one of the beatitudes from the Sermon on the Mount, begins in hushed and somber mood. As the music proceeds, however, mourning is transformed into comfort. The second movement, in the dark key of B-flat minor, is centered on the heavy rhythms of a funeral-march, with the chorus proclaiming the inevitability of man's fate, "For all flesh is like the grass". A lighter central episode provides some brief respite before the funeral-march returns. Eventually, at "But the word of the Lord endures forever", an energetic *allegro* emerges, once more transfiguring darkness into light and leading to a glorious conclusion. In the third movement, the baritone soloist and chorus begin by pondering the transience of human existence. The soloist then asks, "in whom shall I find consolation", and the reply, "I

trust in you”, wells up from the depths in a rising crescendo of affirmation. This leads seamlessly into a broad, imposing fugue, remarkable for its omnipresent pedal D which, whilst creating considerable tension during the fugue itself, also provides an unshakable foundation for the final resolution.

After the intensity of the first three movements, the pivotal fourth—a serene pastorale—provides the opportunity for contemplation and rest. This is music of exceptional beauty, and it is hardly surprising that this movement is so widely known and loved.

The fifth movement features a sublime soprano solo; the chorus plays an accompanying role. Whereas the baritone soloist in the third movement sings of grief and doubt, the soprano’s message here is one of maternal consolation. Brahms reserves his most dramatic music for the imposing sixth movement. It begins in reflective mood, but soon the baritone soloist introduces the familiar verses “we will not all fall asleep, we will...all be transformed...at the time of the last trumpet”, at which point the music explodes into a blaze of sound and energy. The intensity builds up until “Death, where is your sting?” where a majestic fugue ensues. In the middle of this fugue two *fortissimo* climaxes grow out of an exhilarating Jacob’s ladder that reaches up to heaven as it passes from the lower ranges to the upper voices. The last movement begins with a radiant melody from the sopranos, followed by the basses. The moving final section is a subtle reworking of music from the very opening, and the *Requiem* reaches its peaceful conclusion at the same word with which it began: “Blessed”.

We perform tonight the *Requiem* with a piano transcription written by Brahms himself. The arrangement for two pianists brings at times an intimate, chamber music like quality to the work, and at others a sparkling clarity in contrapuntal textures, something difficult to render in the orchestral version. This version, the so-called “London” setting of the work, premiered in 1871.

About the Conductor

Brian Galante, *conductor*, is Associate Dean for the School of Music, Theatre & Dance, and Director of Choral Studies at PLU. In Fall 2022, he became the seventh conductor of the Choir of the West. During his time at PLU, Dr. Galante also conducted Chorale, University Singers (SA), and Knights Chorus (TB), and taught undergraduate courses in vocal pedagogy for the choral music educator, choral methods, and choral literature. Dr. Galante continues to find success and acclaim as a composer and arranger. His compositions are published by *GalanteMusic*, *Walton*, *Colla Voce Music*, and *Pavane Publishing*; have been performed by professional, collegiate, and advanced high school choirs throughout the United States and Europe; and recorded for commercial release by Delos, Centaur Records, MSR Classic, and PLU Media. He is the recipient of multiple ASCAP Plus awards, and a regular composer-in-residence for the Taylor Festival Choir (Charleston, SC). Galante received the Doctor of Musical Arts degree in choral conducting, with a related field in voice science and pedagogy, from the University of North Texas. He holds Master of Music and Bachelor of Music degrees from Louisiana State University. Choirs under Galante’s direction have offered invitational performances in Carnegie Hall and Avery Fisher Hall, Lincoln Center, New York; the Meyerson Symphony Center, Dallas; Notre Dame Cathedral and Sacre Coeur, Paris; the 2010 Washington Music Educators Association conference; the 2011 Northwest MENC Conference; and the 2012 Northwest Division ACDA Conference. Frequently in demand as a clinician and adjudicator, Galante has conducted honor choirs at all levels. He remains an active member of the American Choral Directors Association (ACDA), National Collegiate Choral Organization (NCCO), the American Society for Composers, Authors and Publishers (ASCAP), Washington ACDA, and the Washington Music Educators Association. He served as President of the Northwestern ACDA Region from 2018-2020, Conference Chair of the 2020 Northwestern ACDA Region Conference, Program Chair of the 2010 and 2018 Conferences, on the National ACDA Technology Committee (2007-2011), Associate Conference Chair of the 2013 National ACDA Conference, and President of Louisiana ACDA from 2001-2003.

About the Artists

Amy Boers, *piano*, is well known as a collaborative pianist, music director, singer, and church musician. As pianist and collaborator, she currently holds positions at PLU (staff pianist), Symphony Tacoma (principal keyboard), and Symphony Tacoma Voices (pianist and assistant rehearsal conductor). Her work at PLU is varied between accompanying the acclaimed Choir of the West, accompanying and coaching private voice students, team-teaching numerous theater classes, and most recently she was named Music Director for productions in PLU's Theatre & Dance program, including *Amélie*, music revues *Off Broadway*, and *When You Wish Upon a Star*, and *Jasper in Deadland*. Amy is frequently asked to collaborate and perform with world-renowned conductors and elite ensembles at NWACDA, Washington ACDA, NAFME, and WMEA conventions. Recent notable collaborations have been with Jason Max Ferdinand, Brian Edward Galante, Jace Saplan, Jonathan Talberg, and Rosephanye Powell (Summer 2024). As a true collaborative artist known for her deep insight and “getting inside the conductor’s head,” Amy provides feedback through the special lens of accompanist, singer, and conductor combined. She has led pedagogical workshops for choral conductors and collaborative artists regionally and in Canada. Her recent session “The Power of Two” focused on collaborative rehearsal techniques to develop between conductor and pianist. In addition to her keyboard artistry, she is an active singer both recording commercial music and performing live. She treasures singing with Musing, a beautiful project-based treble ensemble, as well as her vocal collaborations in the studio with local composers and singers.

Oksana Ejokina, *piano*, is Coordinator of Keyboard Studies and Associate Professor of Music at PLU. An artist of great breadth and versatility, she appears frequently as guest recitalist and chamber musician on concert series across the United States and abroad. She has soloed with the Seattle Symphony, St. Petersburg Chamber Philharmonic in Russia, Tacoma Symphony, and performed in venues such as the Phillips Collection in Washington DC, Benaroya Hall in Seattle, Davies Orchestra Hall in San Francisco, and Klassik Keyifler Festival in Turkey. A dedicated performer of new music, she has premiered works by Marilyn Shrude, Wayne Horvitz, Bern Herbolsheimer, and Laura Kaminsky, among others. She has been featured on multiple live radio broadcasts on such stations as WFMT-Chicago, KUOW and KING FM in Seattle, Maine Public Radio, and NPR Performance Today. Her collaborations have included concerts with the Seattle Chamber Players, Avalon String Quartet, violinists Ian Swensen and Andrew Jennings, and cellists Johannes Moser and Anthony Elliott. Ejokina holds a Doctor of Musical Arts degree in piano performance from Stony Brook University. She is the pianist of the Volta Piano Trio, whose recordings for Con Brio label received accolades in multiple international music magazines, such as *The Strad*, *Gramophone* and *American Record Guide*. A sought-after teacher, she has given piano and chamber music masterclasses in colleges and universities across the US and is in demand as an adjudicator. Additionally, Ejokina is Artistic Director of several flagship classical music programs at the Icicle Creek Center for the Arts, including the International Chamber Music Festival/Institute and Winter Piano Festival, which annually welcomes advanced pianists from the most prestigious colleges and conservatories in the US and Canada.

The CHOIR of the WEST

SOPRANO

Caroline Bergren*
Molly Bliss
Erin Burson
Caitlyn Carnahan
Hannah McVay
Emily Morse
Ellie O'Brien^
Kristen Ronning
Allie Watkins

ALTO

Caitlyn Babcock^
Sophia Barkhurst
Lillian Gundersen
Jessica Heinauer
Meghan Johnson
Marissa McBride
Kyla Rivera
Abigail Thompson

TENOR

Joel Barkman
Jake Kesling
Yakov Lychik^
Spencer McCray
Zyreal Oliver-Chandler
Jacob Ray
Dane Schmidt
Allen Tugade

BASS

Daniel Beck
Jack Burrows
Robert Cope-Powell
Glen Fritz^
Jonathan Holder
Kody Smith
Isaiah Utto-Galarneau
Dominic Walker

* Choir of the West President

^ Section Leader