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UNIVERSITY CHOIR

Saturday 18 March, 7.30pm
Great Hall, Trent Building

PROGRAMME

Ein deutsches Requiem (A German Requiem),
Op.45

Johannes Brahms
(1833-1897)

There is a Sennheiser Infrared enhanced hearing system in the Djanogly Recital Hall, please ask for a headset from our front-of-house staff.



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PROGRAMME NOTES AND TEXTS

Ein deutsches Requiem (A German Requiem), Op.45

Johannes Brahms
(1833-1897)

Sophie Lagden soprano
Peter Saunders baritone

- I. Blessed are they that mourn, for they shall be comforted. (St Matthew). They that sow in tears: shall reap in joy. He that now goeth on his way weeping, and beareth forth good seed: shall doubtless come again with joy, and bring his sheaves with him. (Psalm 126). Blessed are they that mourn: for they shall be comforted.
- II. For all flesh is as grass, and all the glory of man as the flower of grass. The grass withereth, and the flower thereof falleth away. (I Peter). Be patient, therefore, brethren, unto the coming of the Lord. Behold, the husbandman waiteth for the precious fruit of the earth, and hath long patience for it, until he receive the early and the later rain. Be ye patient. (James) For all flesh is as grass, and all the glory of man as the flower of grass. The grass withereth, and the flower thereof falleth away. But the word of the Lord endureth for ever. (I Peter). 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).
- III. Lord, let me know mine end, and the number of my days: that I may be certified how long I have to live. Behold thou hast made my days as it were a span long: and mine age is even as nothing in respect of thee: and verily every man living is altogether vanity. For man walketh in a vain shadow, and disquieteth himself in vain: he heapeth up riches, and cannot tell who shall gather them. And now, Lord, what is my hope: truly my hope is even in thee. (Psalm 39). But the righteous souls are in the hand of God, and there shall no torment touch them. (Wisdom of Solomon).
- IV. O how amiable are thy dwellings: thou Lord of hosts. My soul hath a desire and longing to enter into the courts of the Lord: my heart and my flesh rejoice in the living God. Blessed are they that dwell in thy house: they will be always praising thee. (Psalm 84).
- V. 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. (S John). As one whom his mother comforteth, so will I comfort you. (Isaiah). Now behold me, ye see how for a little while labour and toil were my lot, yet I have found much rest. (Ecclesiasticus). 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. As one whom his mother comforteth, so will I comfort you.
- VI. For here have we no continuing city, but we seek one to come. (Hebrews). 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



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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? (I Corinthians). 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).

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

As may be seen from the English version above (tonight's performance will be sung in German), Brahms drew all of his text from the Bible, combining quotations from Old and New Testaments to form a non-liturgical meditation on death.

The death of Brahms's close friend Schumann may have been his starting-point, and indeed Schumann himself had noted the title *Ein deutsches Requiem* in his own project book.

Brahms composed the work chiefly in the years 1865–6, though he used earlier material for the second movement, which he had previously thought to include in his First Piano Concerto.

If Schumann's death was the starting-point of the work, the death of Brahms's mother, to whom he was greatly devoted, was its finishing-point, and the final movement to be composed (No.5) bears witness to this in its choice of words. There were three 'first' performances of the Requiem; movements 1–3 were given in Vienna in 1867 (to a mixed reception), movements 1–4 and 6–7 were given in Bremen Cathedral on Good Friday 1868, and the complete work as we know it today was given in Leipzig in 1869. *Ein deutsches Requiem* quickly achieved a popularity which it has never lost, and formed the greatest single success of Brahms's career.

Some of the movements have a unified structure, the rondo form first and fourth movements, the ternary fifth and last. Others are composite movements: No.2 moves from a funeral march with chorale to a triumphant contrapuntal concluding section; No.3 from a bass aria with chorus, to a complex fugue over a pedal point; No.6 from a restless chorus, through a depiction of the last trump, to a fugal hymn of praise. Commentators have speculated on whether a specific Lutheran chorale underlies the whole; there is no conclusive evidence for this, though the opening is related to several actual chorale melodies, and this opening in turn generates other themes in the course of the work – including Brahms's own chorale in movement 2. All elements of Brahms's mature style find place: gentle but intense, haunting melodies, rich chromatic harmonies, complex fugal writing, opulent orchestration, drawing on his wide historical sympathies from Schütz, through Bach, Beethoven, Schubert, to the



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music of his own time. All this rich stylistic input is blended into a work of great power, comfort and reassurance. The very close of the work returns to its opening themes, and 'Blessed are they that mourn' has become 'Blessed are the dead which die in the Lord from henceforth'.

Robert Pascall, 2023

CALUM FRASER

Conductor

Calum Fraser is a versatile conductor who specialises in choral and operatic repertoire. He studied at The University of Manchester and with Simon Halsey, Adrian Partington and Sarah Tenant-Flowers. Calum is currently the Director of Music at St Leonard's Church in Streatham and Musical Director of Streatham Choral, where recent concerts have included Handel's Messiah at Cadogan Hall.

He is Director of Choirs and a conducting tutor at The University of Nottingham, with whom he travelled to Malaysia in 2016 and directed orchestral performances in Ningbo and Zhejiang, China, in 2017. Calum is also a founding Musical Director of Scottish professional chamber choir Caledonian Voices and the founding Artistic Director of Magnetic Opera, with whom he has conducted The Barber of Seville, Maria Stuarda, La bohème, The Medium and The Marriage of Figaro.

Previously, he was Musical Director of Farnham & Bourne Choral Society, Winterbourne Opera and Opera'r Ddraig and worked with ensembles including St George's Singers and Ad Solem. Calum has appeared in masterclasses with leading conductors including Richard Bonyngne and Eric Whitacre.

SOPHIE LAGDEN

Soloist - Soprano

Sophie is a 3rd Year History of Art student who has been singing with the university choir and chamber choir since her second year. Whilst at university she has also sung with Viva Voce and St Mary's where she was a choral scholar. Taught by renowned singer and opera coach Fiona Dobie, Sophie continues to work on classical repertoire and hopes to further her training at Conservatoire next year.



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PETER SAUNDERS

Soloist - Baritone

Peter is a final year Liberal Arts student who has sung with the University and Chamber Choirs throughout his time at Nottingham, and previously as a chorister for St Mary's, Barnes. Peter will continue his studies at Trinity Laban Conservatoire in London.

ROB CHALLINOR

Repetiteur

Rob plays for all sorts of people; singers, choirs, education workshops, music therapy and some solo work. He has been lucky enough to travel widely in this capacity covering Europe, New Zealand, the far east and America. He is accompanist for ExCathedra education and a reviewer for Musicwebinternational fitting in nicely with his hobby collecting old recordings and unsung composers.

SAMUEL ALI

Pianist

Samuel Ali was born in Kent and has Turkish and Italian heritage. He now lives and works in London, as an organist, accompanist and teacher. He studied at the Royal College of Music as a postgraduate, and at the Royal Northern College of Music as an undergraduate, gaining scholarships to both institutions. Before his studies, he was the Organ Scholar of Rochester Cathedral.



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UNIVERSITY CHOIR

University Choir is a large choir comprising current students, staff and alumni of the University of Nottingham. The choir rehearses weekly and tackles a wide range of repertoire from Baroque to 21st-century works. Repertoire has included Szymanowski's Stabat Mater, Beethoven's Symphony No.9 'Choral', John Adams' Harmonium, Rachmaninov's The Bells and Mozart's Requiem. Every year opportunities are provided for talented students to perform solos with the Choir, receive mentoring as Assistant Conductors or work with the Lakeside team as Arts Administration Trainees

Calum Fraser Director

Kelvin Macharia Assistant Conductor

Rob Challinor Repetiteur

Anna Gould & Amaia Robertson Nogues Arts Administration Trainees

Soprano

Iona Aylwin
Catherine Barker
Ellie Beard
Julie Bonnet-Durville
Becky Brundrett-Hall
Lauren Cawkwell
Jessica Clarke
Miriam Croft
Isabel Dumbleton
Anna Gould
Rebecca Hughes
Meg Ingles
Tianran Jin
Erin Johnson
Ambrose Kersely
Victoria Korabelnikova-Bull
Sophie Lagden
Michelle Lam
Orla Lyons
Elizabeth McShane
Kathleen Murray
Annabel Rumble
Gemma Scales
Pia Schardt
Donna Smith
Noreen Thomas
Alice Tune
Hannah Walton-Hughes

Alto

Esme Bloodworth
Lucy Blick
Rosemary Carpenter
Lauren Clayton
Hazel Cooper
Aimee Efemey
Rosalind Helsby
Millie Huthwaite
Hattie Johnson
Lydia Kear
Natasha Liew
Jessica Meyer
Kalilah Pampam
Lily Roslof
Anne Sempik
Marina Serdar
Phoebe Stimpson
Franka Zlatic
Amy Box

Tenor

Jacob Crabtree
Owen Ebanks
James Herbert
Warrick Kear
Chris Ma
Thomas Morris

Bass

Fergus Babb
Daniel Blyth
Sam Boobier
Max Butterworth
Frederick Falzon
Alex Foster
Sam Grimes
Nicholas Huaman
Tommoso Kelly
Theo McKinnon
Lawrence Reynolds
Ben Richards
Peter Saunders
Charles Watkins



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