



Johannes Brahms
A German Requiem, Op. 45

Kristen Wunderlich, soprano

Eric Kesler, bass

Susan Read and Patsy Surratt, piano

David Lowry, Conductor

YORK COUNTY CHORAL SOCIETY

Sunday, March 4, 2012 - 4:00 p.m.

Unity Presbyterian Church

303 Tom Hall Street, Fort Mill, SC

AN OPEN LOVE LETTER TO DAVID FROM HIS CHORAL SOCIETY

March, 4, 2012

Dear David,

In 1981-82 you, along with Dr. Shirley Fishburne, decided to create a singing group with the purpose of "performing choral masterworks with the composer's intended accompaniments". The auditions were a resounding success, the York County Choral Society was born and you, Dr. David Lowry, became its conductor, artistic director, instructor, and guiding spirit.

YCCS is now in it's 31st season and some of us have sung in every one of those concerts, traveled twice to the United Kingdom, to Piccolo Spoleto in Charleston, the National Cathedral in Washington, DC, and to numerous concert halls, churches and other venues around the region. All of it arranged and led by you. We have learned and sung some of the world's most glorious music with organ, piano or orchestral accompaniment, all directed by you.

Some of us arrived later but were made to feel welcome and included by your gracious smile and warm words. We learned to rely on your judgment, your musical knowledge, and your never faltering baton. We have learned and have sung some of the world's most glorious music with organ, piano or orchestral accompaniment. You taught us the heart and soul of the music along with the notes.

We learned to "listen up" when you reprimanded us for not counting, for wrong notes, and most especially for talking during rehearsal time. We went home and listened to our rehearsal tapes over and over as you said we should. We arrived on time, sat in our assigned seats, stood up for untold hours, sang the same phrases for what seemed a million times until we got it the way you wanted it. We complained about it all but loved every minute. You taught us what it takes to make truly good music. And making truly good music is the most soul satisfying reward possible.

And now, you are retiring. Your last concert with us will be The Defiant Requiem performance of the Verdi in Columbia on April 15th. We know it is time for you to retire. We know traveling from Columbia and back is tiring. We know you need some much deserved rest. We know all the reasons why, but we also know how much you have meant to us, how much you have done for us and how much you will be missed.

The York County Choral Society will continue under new direction but it will always reflect the spirit of its co-founder. You showered us with your many God given gifts for 31 years. We want you to know how very grateful we are.

Our love and thanks,
York County Choral Society

YORK COUNTY CHORAL SOCIETY

DAVID LOWRY, CONDUCTOR
SUSAN READ, ACCOMPANIST AND VOCAL COACH

SUNDAY, MARCH 4, 2012 - 4:00 P.M.
UNITY PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH, FORT MILL

KRISTEN WUNDERLICH, SOPRANO
ERIC KESLER, BARITONE
SUSAN READ AND PATSY SURRATT, PIANO

PROGRAM

Organ Chorale Prelude Johannes Brahms (1833-1897)
HERZLICH TUT MICH VERLANGEN, OP. 122

Following the organ work, the audience and chorus will stand and sing
Hymn 98 in *The Presbyterian Hymnal*.

A GERMAN REQUIEM, OP. 45

Brahms

Blessed are they that mourn

Behold, all flesh is as the grass

Lord, make me to know the measure of my days on earth
MR. KESLER

How lovely is thy dwelling place

Ye now are sorrowful
MS. WUNDERLICH

Here on earth have we no continuing place
MR. KESLER

Blessed are the dead which in the Lord die

ENGLISH TEXTS TO A GERMAN REQUIEM

I. Matthew 5:4; Psalm 126:5-6

Blessed are they that mourn, for they shall have comfort. They that sow in tears shall reap in joy. Who goeth forth and weepeth, and beareth precious seed, shall doubtless return with rejoicing, and bring his sheaves with him.

II. I Peter 1:24; James 5:7; I Peter 1:25; Isaiah 35:10

Behold, all flesh is as the grass, and all the goodliness of man is as the flower of grass; for lo, the grass with'reth and the flower thereof decayeth. Now therefore be patient, O my brethren, unto the coming of Christ. See how the husbandman waiteth for the precious fruit of the earth, and hath long patience for it, until he receive the early rain and the latter rain. So be ye patient. The redeemed of the Lord shall return again, and come rejoicing unto Zion; gladness, joy everlasting upon their heads shall be their portion, and tears and sighing shall flee from them.

III. Psalm 39:5-8; Wisdom of Solomon 3:1

Lord, make me to know the measure of my days on earth, to consider my frailty that I must perish. Surely all my days here are as an handbreadth to thee, and my lifetime is as naught to thee. Verily, mankind walketh in a vain show, and their best state is vanity. Man passeth away like a shadow, he is disquieted in vain, he heapeth up riches, and cannot tell who shall gather them. Now Lord, O what do I wait for? My hope is in thee. But the righteous souls are in the hand of God, nor pain nor grief shall nigh them come.

IV. Psalm 84:2, 3, 5

How lovely is thy dwelling place, O Lord of hosts! For my soul, it longeth, yea, fainteth for the courts of the Lord; my soul and body crieth out, yea, for the living God. Blessed are they that dwell within thy house; they praise thy name evermore!

V. John 16:22; Ecclesiasticus 51:35; Isaiah 66:13

Ye now are sorrowful, although ye shall again behold me, and your heart shall be joyful, and your joy no man taketh from you. Yea, I will comfort you, as one whom his own mother comforteth. Look upon me; ye know that for a little time labor and sorrow were mine, but at the last I have found comfort.

VI. Hebrews 13:14; I Corinthians 15:51-55; Revelation to John 4:11

Here on earth have we no continuing place, although we seek one to come. Lo, I unfold unto you a mystery. We shall not all sleep when he cometh, 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 be raised incorruptible, and all we shall be changed. Then what of old was written, the same shall be brought to pass. For death shall be swallowed in victory! Grave, where is thy triumph? Death, O where is they sting? Worthy art thou to be praised, Lord of honor and might, for thou has earth and heaven created, and for thy good pleasure all things have their being and were created.

VII. Revelation to John 14:13

Blessed are the dead which in the Lord die, from henceforth. Saith the spirit, that they rest from their labors, and that their works follow after them.

ARTISTS

Kristen Wunderlich, soprano, is Assistant Professor of Voice at Winthrop University. She has taught previously at The Pennsylvania State University, Luther College, Waldorf College and the University of Texas at Arlington. At the University of North Texas, Denton, she received the degree Master of Music in Vocal Performance in 2001 and was awarded a Doctor of Musical Arts degree in Vocal Performance with an emphasis in Vocal Pedagogy in 2008. She has appeared with the Denton Bach Society, Dallas's Orchestra of New Spain, the Texas Chamber Artists, and a performance of Pergolesi's *Stabat Mater* in the Czech Republic. Dr. Wunderlich sang in the YCCS performance of Handel's *Messiah* in 2008, and in our 30th anniversary performance of Verdi's *Requiem*.

Eric Kesler, baritone, holds the degrees Master of Music in Performance and Bachelor of Music Education from Appalachian State University. He is currently pursuing the degree Doctor of Musical Arts from the University of South Carolina, and is an adjunct professor of voice at Coker College, Hartsville. Mr. Kesler has performed in several venues throughout the Eastern US and Rome, Italy. He was most recently seen in the USC School of Music opera production of Friedrich von Flotow's *Martha* in the role of Plunkett. Kesler is the voice instructor for the annual Windswept Music Conference and holds advanced level teaching certificates from the Creative Motion Alliance as well as serving on the executive board. This is Mr. Kesler's second appearance with the YCCS, having appeared in 2009 as soloist in Fauré's *Requiem*.

Patsy Orr Surratt, piano, is the Director of Music here at Unity Presbyterian Church, where she has been since 1995. She not only serves as organist, but also directs three choirs and is responsible for two handbell choirs. She is a graduate of Winthrop University in piano pedagogy, a former public school music teacher and currently has a large class of private piano students. She recently completed a three-year certification program with the Choristers Guild Institute. She studied organ with David Lowry and has appeared on the Charlotte AGO Summer Recital Series.

Susan Eichelberger Read, piano, received two degrees in vocal performance from the Cincinnati College-Conservatory of Music. For 25 years she made a singing career in opera, oratorio and solo recitals. Since moving to Rock Hill in 1991, she has held organist positions at Chester A.R.P. Church and currently at Oakland Avenue Presbyterian Church. She also maintains a voice-teaching studio. This is her eighteenth season as accompanist and vocal coach for the YCCS.

David Lowry, conductor, is the co-founder of the York County Choral Society. He is Professor of Music *Emeritus* at Winthrop University where he has been the principal organ professor since 1965. He currently is the Parish Musician of The Church of the Good Shepherd (Episcopal) in Columbia and a music reviewer for Columbia's *Free Times*. For some years he was the Organist and Choirmaster of Rock Hill's Episcopal Church of Our Saviour. He has been a leader in the Charlotte and Columbia chapters of the American Guild of Organists and is a past president of the Association of Anglican Musicians. He was also a principal figure in the development of the Royal School of Church Music in America, for which he received the award HonRSCM in the United Kingdom. He is a graduate of Baldwin-Wallace College, Union Theological Seminary and the University of North Texas. With trumpeter Michael Miller he is organist for the ProOrgano CD *Breaking Ground*. In the 31 years leading the YCCS, he has conducted many major works and led the chorus in two tours in England, Scotland, Wales and Ireland. The YCCS has sung concerts in Lancaster, York, Chester, Charleston, Dillon, Raleigh and Fort Mill. In 2007 the YCCS was in residence at the National Cathedral in Washington for three Choral Evensongs and one Sunday Eucharist.

PROGRAM NOTE

Today's concert features the work of Johannes Brahms who was born in 1833 in Hamburg and died at age 63 in 1897 in Vienna. To begin today's concert, we offer a chorale prelude from Brahms' Opus 122, a group of eleven chorale preludes for organ, written shortly before his death. His creative endeavor was clearly based on his knowledge of Bach's chorale preludes. This being the season of Lent, it seems appropriate to choose the work based on the Passion Chorale *Herzlich tut mich verlangen* found in *The Presbyterian Hymnal* to the text "O sacred head now wounded." For the many visitors to Unity church's new worship space, it is a moment to experience the joys of a fine organ and a fine acoustical environment.

The phenomenon of Johannes Brahms as one of the most important composers in the history of music goes without controversy. The personality and social stance of Brahms have tempted the curiosity of many, especially in respect to what stimulated the extraordinary treasure of his musical composition.

Among the curiosities were his intense relationship with Clara Wieck (Robert Schumann's wife) as well as other women later in life; his political stance in the music world against the "decadence" of Richard Wagner's music and of Wagner's following; his less-than-cordial manner; and his formative years (no choice of his) living in a brothel. These outer visibilities, as is often the case, have little to do with what goes on inside the man himself.

It is frequently remarked how "classical" his expression of music is. He looked to the strengths of music from the Renaissance to Bach and Handel, and to Beethoven, yet at the same time was a student and a master of late 19th century chromatic harmonies. He seemed to acknowledge the fact that Beethoven himself paved the road to Romanticism in music. He idolized the works of Beethoven.

Brahms abhorred the concept of writing instrumental music with a "program." We usually find his expressions to be succinct, but not pithy; deeply felt, but not maudlin; warm in color but not distorted.

As far as we can determine, Brahms rarely darkened the door of a church. Liturgy, theological expostulation, corporate worship, and community were not part of what Brahms' mind or faith required. Yet throughout his life he kept his grandmother's Bible (the German Lutheran translation), reading it continually.

It was in 1854 (at age 21) that he sketched the second movement, shortly after his friend Robert Schumann's attempted suicide. The majority of the remainder was composed in 1865 (at age 32). The fifth movement was added after the official premiere in 1868 (at age 35).

It was from his grandmother's Bible that he drew the remarkable compilation of texts for *Ein Deutsches Requiem* (A German Requiem), clearly not intended for the liturgical mass of the dead, but for the comfort of the living. By choosing this totally Biblical route, the work transcends any liturgical purpose that can be claimed by the Catholics or the Protestants. Brahms said that the title of the work might better be titled "A Human Requiem," but chose "German" simply to indicate the language used (not Latin). The mix of Old and New Testament verses leaves interpretation of theology entirely up to the listener. As one observes from the Bible verses Brahms selected, there are no verses citing the Christian belief in Jesus as savior.

Despite his disdain for "program" one must recognize that Brahms set these texts with enormous theological sensitivity with a type of word painting—or "subject" painting. There are veiled musical references to funeral marches; bold "engraved-in-stone" words of the prophets and apostles; lyrical references to heaven and joy; fugal expositions for redemption; the use of *forte* rather than *piano* for "blessed [happy] are the dead." These are not accidents, but deliberate and marvelously crafted attempts to convey the strength and comfort of the Biblical texts through the power and mystery of musical expression.

Many have remarked that God has often sought to speak through the work of those who may not measure up to standards imposed by other persons. Surely Brahms' music is one of the extraordinary vehicles that God chooses to use.

The accompaniment for today's performance is totally authentic. Remember that before the 20th century the only way many works were heard or inspected was from a manuscript, and it was somewhat common practice that orchestral works were reduced to a score that could be played on a piano. Brahms reduced the score to a piano duet and showed it to Clara Schumann on Christmas of 1866. It was that reduction that was used in the first British performance in 1871 in the London home of Sir Henry Thompson and Lady Kate Loder Thompson (a pianist), where no orchestra was possible. Lady Thompson and Cipriani Potter were the pianists. And that performance was in English!

David Lowry

YCCS PATRONS 2011-2012

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Soprano Lil Adickes, Glenna Boaman, Linda Caines, Sara Castillo, Martha Cowan, Judy Cowell, Lura Holler, Jeannie James, Pat Johnson, Euolinda Logan, Aileen McGowan, Anna Mittower, Mary Moss, Bettye Rawls, Gayle Sawyer, Laura Shrum, Frances Stein, Linda Sutton, Jean Thompson

Alto Ann Adams, Ann Cody, Faye Daniel, Susan Kelly, Nina Lynch, Teresa Mittower, MaryAnn Moore, Betty Salmond, Karen Sells, Delores Tune

Tenor John Arant, Bradley Brown, Jeff Culp, Chris Fischesser, James Glenn, Evelyn Harper, Priscilla Jennings, Dan Lawson, John McCulloch, Don Moe, George Sawyer, Jim Welsh

Bass Dwight Benson, Mike Boaman, Bill Castillo, Page Connelly, Dave Cowan, Michael Davis, William Davis, Ralph Johnson, Fred Langford, Tim Moe, Larry Richards, Harry Tune, Al Ward, Carrot Williams

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Oakland Baptist Church, Rock Hill; Unity Presbyterian Church, Fort Mill; First Presbyterian Church, Rock Hill; Regal Graphics; Martha Geissler; Patsy Surratt

YORK COUNTY CHORAL SOCIETY REPERTORY

MAJOR WORKS OVER 31 YEARS

Albright <i>A Song to David</i>	Mozart <i>Coronation Mass</i>
Bach <i>Cantata 147</i>	Mozart <i>Grand Mass in C minor</i>
Bach <i>Magnificat</i>	Mozart <i>Missa Brevis in D</i>
Bach <i>Mass in B minor</i>	Mozart <i>Requiem</i>
Bach <i>St. John Passion</i>	Mozart <i>Vespers</i>
Bernstein <i>Chichester Psalms</i>	Orff <i>Carmina Burana</i>
Brahms <i>A German Requiem</i>	Poulenc <i>Gloria</i>
Brahms <i>Liebeslieder Waltzer</i>	Schubert <i>Mass in G</i>
Britten <i>Ceremony of Carols</i>	Stravinsky <i>Symphony of Psalms</i>
Britten <i>Rejoice in the Lamb</i>	Thompson <i>Peaceable Kingdom</i>
Britten <i>St. Nicholas</i>	Vaughan Williams <i>Dona nobis pacem</i>
Duruflé <i>Requiem</i>	Vaughan Williams <i>Five Mystical Psalms</i>
Fauré <i>Requiem</i>	Verdi <i>Requiem</i>
Handel <i>Messiah</i>	*Vieira <i>Seven Last Words of</i> <i>Christ on the Cross</i>
Haydn <i>The Creation</i>	Vivaldi <i>Gloria</i>
*Higginson <i>Requiem</i>	*Wiley <i>Columbus: Dream to Reality</i>
Honegger <i>King David</i>	
Mendelssohn <i>Elijah</i>	

(*denotes American premieres)

PLUS MANY SMALLER WORKS BY COMPOSERS FROM THE 16TH TO THE 21ST CENTURIES

Bach	George-Warren	Kern	Pinkham
Bertalot	German	Lauridson	Poston
Biebl	Gershwin	Leighton	Rorem
Brahms	Gibbons	Lewis	Rutter
Britten	Górecki	Lowry	Schubert
Bruckner	Greenberg	MacMillan	Shaw
Cohen	Greene	Mendelssohn	Sowerby
Conte	Hadley	Mozart	Staheli
Copland	Hailstork	Mulholland	Stanford
Darke	Hancock	Neswick	Tavener
Davison	Handel	Parker	Bruce Thompson
Dawson	Harrison	Parker	Randall Thompson
Duruflé	Hogan	Parry	Vaughan Williams
Fauré	Houkom	Pärt	David A. White
Foster	Ives	Phillips	Nicholas White
Gawthrop			Wyton

The YCCS is an affiliate of the Arts Council of York County.

THE YCCS REVISITS THE VERDI *REQUIEM*
THIS TIME IN THE NATIONALLY RECOGNIZED CONCERT EVENT CALLED

Defiant Requiem: Verdi at Terezín

Sunday, April 15, 2012 at 7:30 p.m.
The Koger Center, Greene and Assembly Streets, Columbia, SC

This full performance of Verdi's *Requiem Mass* includes actors and historic Terezín film and interviews with original chorus members related the full, impassioned story of why these Jewish prisoners, who faced death every day, chose to learn and perform the Verdi Requiem during their darkest hours.

Sixty-eight years ago, Verdi's *Requiem* was performed in the Teresienstadt Nazi concentration camp outside of Prague. There are a precious few survivors, some of whom have spoken to audiences of Defiant Requiem. There is one that sang in the chorus; another was in the audience, along with members of the visiting Red Cross and the Gestapo elite, including the architect of the holocaust, Adolph Eichman.

"When you are starving, the only thing that remains is what goes on in your head," Frederick Terna explained.

"We became part of the Requiem; it was life giving," said Marianka May. Teresienstadt was a Potemkin village, designed to give the Red Cross and the world the impression that Jews were being well-treated.

Like all propaganda, some of it was true. The camp was unique in that it permitted the prisoners - largely artists, writers, composers and musicians - the freedom of artistic expression, after they worked twelve hours a day and experienced starvation. What was not evident at the performance in Teresienstadt was that the chorus members had to continually be replaced as they were shipped off to the gas chambers of Auschwitz.

The irony that this powerful religious work was written by Verdi, an agnostic, as a Catholic mass, performed by Jews in a Nazi concentration camp, was not lost.

One of the survivors noted, "The Nazis thought, 'These dumb Jews, they do not know they are singing their own Requiem.' The Jews thought, 'We were singing their Requiem, and they did not know it.'"

When prisoners sang, "When the wicked have been confounded, doomed to the devouring flames," they must have felt that justice would one day triumph.

And it did. The redemptive power of music has rarely been portrayed with such terror and beauty as with the performance of Verdi's Requiem, both then and now. Sixty-eight years ago, the chorus was hungry, sick and dressed in rags. There was only a rickety piano.

The performance in which YCCS will participate includes both choruses of the University of South Carolina, Larry Wyatt and Alicia Walker, directors, and the Mars Hill College Chamber Choir, Joel Reed, director. The soloists are faculty members of USC: Tina Stallard, soprano; Janet Hopkins, alto; Walter Cuttino, tenor; Jacob Will, bass. The orchestra is the USC Symphony Orchestra, Donald Portnoy, director.

Murry Sidlin, the founder and director of the Defiant Requiem Foundation in Washington, D.C., conducts the production.

Advance tickets may be purchased by phone from Capitoltickets.com or at 1-803-251-2222.