San Francisco Lyric Chorus presents Summer Concert 1998

Johannes Brahms: A German Requiem

Robert Gurney, Music Director
Vicky Van Dewark, Soprano
David Tigner, Bass
Paul A. Jacobson, Piano
Tatiana Baklanova-Feeley, Piano
David Hatt, Organ
Allen Biggs, Percussion

Sunday, August 23, 1998, 5pm
Trinity Episcopal Church, San Francisco
San Francisco Lyric Chorus

Robert Gurney, Music Director
Welcome to the 1998 Summer Concert of the San Francisco Lyric Chorus. Since its formation in 1995, the chorus has offered diverse and innovative music to the community through a gathering of singers who believe in a commonality of spirit and sharing. The debut concert featured music by Gabriel Faure in addition to the *Solemn Mass* by Louis Vierne. The chorus has been involved in several premieres, including Bay Area composer Brad Osness’ *Lamentations*, Ohio composer Robert Witt’s *Four Motets to the Blessed Virgin Mary* (West Coast premiere), and San Francisco composer Kirke Mechem’s *Christmas the Morn* (San Francisco premiere). 1997 featured the music of Amy Beach, America’s first major woman composer, and classic compositions by Mozart and Schubert, and Spring 1998 featured exciting multicultural and international music from around the globe, including music from Alaska’s Inuit people, the Shona people of Zimbabwe, and American folk song, spirituals, and gospel.

*Please sign our mailing list located in the foyer.*
A German Requiem

Johannes Brahms

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Please no photography or audio/video taping during the performance.

We are taping this program for broadcast purposes. If your child becomes uncomfortable during the performance, please take him/her to the foyer. Thank you.
There were two important cities in Brahms’ life – Hamburg, where he was born, and Vienna, the musical capitol of Europe and former home of his idol, Beethoven. After the death of his parents, Brahms had no further ties to Hamburg and moved to Vienna, where he lived for 28 years before succumbing to liver cancer at the age of 64.

His father, Johann Jakob Brahms, had come to Hamburg to make a living as a musician, performing in beer halls and cafes before achieving his goal to play in the Hamburg Philharmonic. Naturally he expected his sons to follow in his musical footsteps, and Johannes succeeded beyond his wildest dreams. His other son, Fritz, was an average pianist and spent most of his life being called the “wrong Brahms.” Elise, the only sister, spent her life as a semi-invalid suffering from chronic migraine headaches.

While Brahms’ musical training was as a pianist, he knew from an early age that music composition was his true passion. He was a virtuoso pianist, but due to performance nerves was never able to perform consistently well in front of audiences.

At the age of 20, Brahms met Robert and Clara Schumann. His life changed dramatically when composer Schumann proclaimed in a famous newspaper article that Johannes Brahms would be the next great musical genius. For the rest of his life, Brahms felt driven to live up to that prediction and was always fearful that his own musical legacy would not survive his death. He worshipped Beethoven and was appalled at the way the biographers of the time had dissected his idol’s private and professional life. An avid collector of musical memorabilia by composers he greatly admired, Brahms wanted history to remember him through his major musical works, not by his personal correspondence, early compositions, or anything that might detract from his place in history. Consequently he destroyed many of his early compositions and letters by burning them or dumping them in the river.

By all accounts, Brahms was a tactless, gruff person who sorely tried the patience of even his few close friends. He was forced to support his family in his early teens by playing in the worst kind of waterfront bars in Hamburg and that experience probably contributed to his dyspeptic views towards mankind and especially toward women. He had a famous though unrequited love affair with Clara Schumann but never married. He was the first major composer to become rich from his music. Although he himself lived frugally, he gave generously to his family and supported promising young musicians but always anonymously.

Johannes Brahms’ musical output consisted of numerous orchestral, piano, chamber, vocal and choral pieces. *A German Requiem* was one of his most famous and most performed, as is his well-known *Cradle Song*. Where is his place in musical history? Jan Swafford, in his wonderful book, *Johannes Brahms: A Biography*, calls Brahms: “Janus-headed: Classical and Romantic, conservative and progressive, looking backward and forward at once.” When he died, the great Modern composers such Schoenberg and Mahler were poised to change the musical world as Brahms had known it.
A German Requiem

Although it is assumed that Brahms wrote the Requiem in memory of his mother’s death in 1865, he always denied it. Certainly that event played a major part in the Requiem’s composition, but it had been in Brahms’ mind as a composition as far back as Robert Schuman’s suicide death in 1856. The second movement contains music from a symphony Brahms had begun after his mentor’s death.

From the beginning Brahms had intended the work to be more of a consolation for the living than a memorial for the dead, as demonstrated in the first lines of the text, “Blessed are they that mourn, for they shall be comforted . . .” The text is not from the liturgical Catholic Latin mass but from Martin Luther’s German Bible and the Apocrypha. The work was not composed all at once but took shape over a period of several years from 1865-1868.

The debut performance of the first three movements took place on December 1, 1867, in Vienna, and a legend has arisen that it was judged a failure. Although there were some boos and hisses, it actually had a very favorable reception. Part of the legend stems from the fugue in the third movement that called for a sustained pedal D in the bass throughout the fugue. Harmonically, not much happens and an over-enthusiastic timpanist felt compelled to play his D as loudly as possible. A minority of audience members expressed their disapproval just as loudly. The Bremen premiere on April 10, 1868, featured six movements. The fugue had been reworked and specific notations for soft playing of the pedal D were added in the hope of preventing any more timpani catastrophies. Only one disagreement arose between the conductor, Karl Reinthaler, and Brahms. Reinthaler noted that in the entire work, Brahms never makes any mention of Jesus Christ, the Savior of mankind. Brahms, who was a humanist and agnostic, did not budge. For him the Requiem was a personal statement, not a liturgical one. He replied in part: “As far as the text is concerned, I confess that I would gladly omit even the word German and instead use Human.” The premiere was an unqualified success and Brahms’ reputation as a major composer was firmly established when he was 35. Brahms later added one more movement for soprano soloist and chorus at the request of his old piano teacher, Eduard Marxsen. The completed German Requiem as we know it today was performed in Leipzig in 1869.

Program Notes by Tom Kuwahara

A German Requiem: The Text

The Bible passages Brahms selected for this work are drawn from Luther’s 16th century translation of the original Hebrew and Greek scriptures into German, the so-called Lutherbibel. By Brahms’ time, though its language already sounded archaic, it had deeply influenced German grammar and style, and its turns of phrase had become fixed expressions of the German language. Its near equivalent for English speakers is the 17th century King James Version, the translation of the Bible that has most similarly affected English—in spite of its archaic sound to our modern ears. The corresponding passages from the King James Version are therefore reproduced here.

Textual Notes by Bradley Arthur Peterson
Requiem Text

I

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.

(St. Matthew 5, 4)

II

Behold, all flesh is as the grass, and all the goodliness of man is as the flower of grass. For lo, the Grass with'theth, 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 and latter rain.

So be ye patient. Albeit the Lord's word endureth for evermore. The redeemed of the Lord shall return again and come rejoicing unto Zion; gladness, joy everlasting, joy upon their heads shall be; joy and gladness, these shall be their portion, and sighing shall flee from them.

(St. Peter 1, 24)

III

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,

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,
Requiem Text

III

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.

(Psalm 39, 5)

IV

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

(Psalm 84, 2f)

V

Ye now are sorrowful, howbeit 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.

(St. John 16, 22)
VI

Here on earth have we no continuing place howbeit, 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 a 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! Death, O where is thy sting? Grave, where is thy victory? Worthy art Thou to be praised, Lord of honor and might, for thou hast earth and heaven created and for Thy good pleasure all things have their being, and were created.

(Heb. 13, 14)


VII

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

(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.
The Artists

Robert Gurney, Music Director

Founder and Music Director Robert Gurney is Organist-Choirmaster at San Francisco's historic Trinity Episcopal Church, Organist at Marin County's Temple Rodef Sholom, one of the Museum Organists at the California Palace of the Legion of Honor, and Assistant Conductor for the San Francisco Choral Society.

A resident of San Francisco since 1978, he has been an active church musician, organ recitalist, vocal coach, and has served as Assistant Conductor-Accompanist for the Sonoma City Opera and the Contra Costa Chorale.

A native of Ohio, he received his education at Youngstown State University and the Cleveland Institute of Music, studying conducting with William Slocum. At Youngstown, he served as Student Assistant Conductor of the Concert Choir that won first place in a college choir competition sponsored by the BBC. In Summer 1997, he was invited to participate in an international choral music festival Music Of Our Time, held in Parthenay, France, and directed by John Poole, Conductor Emeritus, BBC Singers.

Robert Gurney has directed the San Francisco Lyric Chorus in innovative performances of little known works by composers of exceptional interest. The Chorus’ Discovery Series has introduced an eight-part Ave Maria by Tomás Luis de Victoria, the West Coast premiere of Four Motets To The Blessed Virgin Mary, by Robert Witt, and music of Amy Beach, including her monumental Grand Mass in E Flat and the Panama Hymn, written for San Francisco’s 1915 Panama-Pacific Exposition.

Vicky Van Dewark, Soprano

Vicky Van Dewark is well known to Bay Area concert and opera lovers. Her extensive concert repertoire includes such major works as Mozart’s Grand Mass in C Minor and Verdi’s Requiem, and covers styles from Baroque to Contemporary. Reviewers have described her as having “notes of striking darkness and depth,” “smooth craftsmanship and ravishing beauty,” “fiery intensity and a rich voice,” and “power, poise and passion...simply exquisite.” In opera she is most noted for her Rossini interpretations, her portrayal of Mozart heroines Fiordiligi and Donna Elvira, and her performances as Bellini’s Norma. Her years of performing with Pocket Opera of San Francisco have added a vast number of Handel operas to her credit, including the roles of Armida in Rinaldo and Rosmene in Imeneo. Her opera work has brought associations with other local companies, such as Berkeley Opera and Cinnabar Opera Theatre, as well as Concert Opera of San Francisco, where she appeared opposite Carole Neblette as the High Priestess of Vesta in Spontini’s La Vestale. She participated in the San Francisco Opera production of Wagner’s Ring Cycle as a cover for the role of Waltraute in Die Walküre. Ms. Van Dewark currently is on the voice faculty of Holy Names College in Oakland, and is the co-ordinator of their Opera Scenes Workshop.
THE ARTISTS

DAVID TIGNER, BASS

David Tigner has performed with every major orchestra and choral organization in the Bay Area, including the San Francisco Symphony and Opera, and the Oakland and Sacramento symphonies. He has also performed with the Santa Fe Opera, Chicago Lyric Opera, and has performed with the New York Philharmonic at Lincoln Center. He is known for his performances of 20th Century works, and has appeared in a number of premieres. He has received numerous awards, including the Metropolitan Opera and Sullivan Foundation competition awards, and has been a guest lecturer at Stanford and U. C. Berkeley. His teachers include Boris Goldovsky, Martial Singher, Mary Cobb Hill, Elizabeth Swartzkopf and Janet Parlova.

PAUL A. JACOBSON, PIANO

Paul A. Jacobson is Parish Musician at the Episcopal Church of St. John the Evangelist, San Francisco. He holds a doctorate in liturgical history from the Graduate Theological Union in Berkeley, and is on the staff of the Jesuit School of Theology at Berkeley.

Dr. Jacobson holds dual Masters degrees in Organ Performance and Worship and Music from the Yale University Institute of Sacred Music, where his teachers were Gerre Hancock and Charles Krigbaum. In 1979-1980 he was a Marshall Fellow at the Royal Danish Conservatory in Copenhagen, studying organ with Grethe Krogh and conducting with Dan-Olof Stenlund. Specializing in Scandinavian organ music, Jacobson is preparing a performing edition of the unpublished organ works of Niels W. Gade.

From 1984-1991 Dr. Jacobson was on the faculty of the College of St. Catherine in St. Paul, Minnesota, responsible for courses in organ, church music, music history, women’s chorus, and music theatre. He was also the Director of Liturgical Music in the College Chapel, and was an active recitalist, soloist and coach.

Dr. Jacobson has been organist for numerous national meetings, and was featured at the 1995 San Anselmo Organ Festival. He has given solo recitals in Denmark, France, and Israel, as well as throughout the United States. With oboist Lorna Nelson of Montana State University, Mr. Jacobson is the co-founder of the Nelson-Jacobson Duo. He has also served as Assistant Conductor of the San Francisco Chamber Singers. He presently serves as Sub-Dean for the San Francisco Chapter of the American Guild of Organists.

TATIANA BAKLANOVA-FEELY, PIANO

Tatiana Baklanova-Feeley began her musical education at age five in Taganrog, Russia. At twelve, she was awarded the prestigious Regional Prize “First Place with Honors” in southern Russia. She received many awards in Moscow, where she attended the famous Tchaikovsky School of Music, and in Rostov-on-Don, where she completed her formal studies at the Rachmaninov Conservatory before joining the faculty in 1985 as its youngest member. In addition to performances in the Soviet Union, Ms. Baklanova-Feeley has performed extensively in the United States and Europe. Accompanist for Berkeley’s Bella Musica Chorus and Orchestra, she performed solo Rachmaninov preludes on their Spring 1998 program. Ms. Baklanova-Feeley recently gave a solo recital of Mozart, Chopin, and Rachmaninov piano works at Trinity Episcopal Church, and will present an additional recital on Tuesday, August 25, 1998, at 8 p.m., in St. John’s Presbyterian Church, 2727 College Avenue, Berkeley. She currently teaches piano privately.
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David Hatt, Organ

David Hatt, organist, pianist, and harpsichordist, has been represented by Artist Recitals Concert Promotional Services for the past three years. He has concertized from Bucknell University in Lewisburg, Pennsylvania to the University of Alaska in Fairbanks. He received an MA in Music at the University of California, Riverside. He studied with Raymond Boese at the University of Redlands School of Music and also briefly with Anthony Newman at the University of California, San Diego. Currently he is organist at Hillcrest Congregational Church in Pleasant Hill and Dean of the San Jose Chapter of the American Guild of Organists.

Allen Biggs, Percussion

Allen Biggs has a Bachelor’s degree from San Francisco State University, and a Masters degree from the San Francisco Conservatory of Music. He has performed with the San Francisco Opera, the San Francisco Ballet, the Bay Area Jazz Composers Orchestra, and the Berkeley, Marin, and Oakland Symphony Orchestras. He is the principal percussionist with the Santa Rosa Symphony Orchestra and the New West Chamber Orchestra. He has gone on two European tours with Phantom of the Opera, and will tour this fall with Western Opera Theater.

Special Thank You To:

David Pratt, Bass Solo Understudy
Kathryn Singh, Soprano Solo Understudy
Acknowledgements

The San Francisco Lyric Chorus sends a warm, special thanks to

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Trinity Episcopal Church, founded in 1849, was the first Episcopal congregation west of the Rocky Mountains. Some of the parish pioneers were among the most prominent San Franciscans of their day: McAllister, Turk, Eddy, Austin, Taylor, and many others.

The parish’s significant role in the history of San Francisco continues today in the vision of its current rector, the Rev. Robert Warren Cromey. Notable among Trinity’s many community and social programs is the founding of Project Open Hand by Ruth Brinker in 1985.

The present church structure, built in 1892, was designed by Arthur Page Brown, who was also the architect of San Francisco City Hall and the Ferry Building. Inspired by the Norman-Romanesque architecture of Durham Cathedral, it is built of roughhewn Colusa sandstone and features a massive castle-like central tower.

The Trinity organ was built in 1924 by Ernest M. Skinner and is one of the finest remaining examples of his artistry. Built after his second trip to Europe, it reflects the influence of his long creative association with the great English builder Henry Willis III. The instrument’s four manuals and pedal contain many of the numerous orchestral imitative voices perfected by Skinner. Among them, the Trinity organ contains the French Horn, Orchestral Oboe, Clarinet, Tuba Mirabilis, and eight ranks of Strings. This wealth of orchestral color provides a range of expressiveness evocative of a symphony orchestra.

The newly restored historic 1896 Sohmer nine-foot concert grand piano is used in today’s performance. This fine instrument, built during an era of experimentation in piano building, boasts some unique features, suggesting that this instrument was a showpiece for the Sohmer Company. The entire piano is built on a larger scale than modern instruments. There are extra braces in the frame for increased strength. Each note has an additional length of string beyond the bridge to develop more harmonics in the tone. The treble strings are of a heavier gauge and thus stretched under higher tension than modern pianos, and there are additional strings at the top that do not play – added solely to increase the high harmonic resonance in the treble (producing that delightful “sparkle”).

Due to its superb acoustics, magnificent organ, and the commitment of a long succession of musicians, Trinity has presented a wealth of great music to the City. The San Francisco Lyric Chorus has become a part of this tradition, thanks to the generous encouragement and nurturing of this vibrant congregation.
The San Francisco Lyric Chorus has been chartered by the State of California as a non-profit corporation and approved by the U.S. Internal Revenue Service as a 501c(3) organization. This status means that the Chorus now may accept charitable donations, and donors may claim those donations as tax deductible.

The San Francisco Lyric Chorus is a young chorus, and we have grown tremendously in musical ability and in numbers during our few short years. We will continue to provide beautiful and exciting music for our audiences, and look forward to becoming one of San Francisco’s premiere choral ensembles. We would like to perform works with chamber orchestra and other combinations of instruments, hire an accompanist for rehearsals, and occasionally perform at other sites. Continued growth and development, however, will require us to find increased financial support from friends, audiences and other agencies.

Monetary gifts of any amount are most welcome. We also have established a new fund-raising program: Adopt-A-Singer. For $20, you can make a single trimester gift to the Chorus in support of a chorus member of your choice. For $100, you can be a “patron” of an entire section! All contributors will be acknowledged in our concert programs.

For further information, call (415) 775-5111.
San Francisco Lyric Chorus
1998-1999 Concert Season

1998 Fall Concert

The English Sound: choral gems celebrating cathedral sonorities including Thomas Tallis’ *Missa Puer Natus Est Nobis*, Gregorio Allegri’s *Miserere*, and Ralph Vaughan Williams’ *Fantasia on Christmas Carols*

Performance Date: Sunday, December 6, 1998, 5 PM
Trinity Episcopal Church
Rehearsals begin Sunday, September 13, 1998
Regular Rehearsals: Mondays 7:15 - 9:45 PM

1999 Spring Concert

Musical Poetry: 20th Century British and American choral settings including Benjamin Britten’s *Rejoice in the Lamb*, Kirke Mechem’s *Blessed Are They* and *To Music* (San Francisco premieres) and *Blow Ye The Trumpet*; Randall Thompson’s *Alleluia* and *The Best of Rooms*, and William Harris’ *Faire is the Heaven*

Performance: Sunday, April 18, 1999, 5 PM
Trinity Episcopal Church
Rehearsals begin Monday, January 4, 1999

1999 Summer Concert

Giuseppe Verdi
*Four Sacred Pieces*

Performance: Sunday, August 22, 1999, 5 PM
Rehearsals begin Monday, May 3, 1999

For more information about joining the chorus and concert activities call Robert Gurney at (415) 775-5111 and see the Lyric Chorus website at http://www.choralarchive.org/SFLyric.
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Fantasia on Christmas Carols
The Blessed Son of God

Robert Parsons
Ave Maria

Orlando Gibbons
Hosanna to the Son of David

Paul Manz
E’en So Lord Jesus, Quickly Come

First Rehearsal: Sunday, September 13, 1998 2:00 - 5:00pm
Regular Rehearsals: Mondays, 7:15 - 9:45pm
Performance date: Sunday, December 6, 1998, 5:00pm
Place: Trinity Episcopal Church, San Francisco
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