

The Los Alamos Choral Society

presents

The German Requiem

by

Johannes Brahms

Conductor: KATHLEEN B. MANLEY

Organist and Accompanist: DOROTHY B. DEAN

Soloists: AILEEN CHERRY, Soprano

FREDERICK REINES, Bass-Baritone

Sunday, March 22, 1959

3:30 p. m.

Civic Auditorium

The German Requiem

Johannes Brahms

Few major composers throughout history have withstood the temptation to set at least part of the Roman liturgy to music. Palestrina, Mozart and Verdi all wrote Masses for the dead based on the very words and spirit of the Latin Mass. Brahms' work, however, departs from the traditional form of the Requiem by offering up no prayer for the dead, by being sung in German rather than in Latin and by using a text from the Holy Scriptures which Brahms himself chose and in an order which he himself decided. The music is simple, straightforward; there is no hint of petition, of yearning, of fire or of brimstone—only one man's trust in his God and a belief in a life everlasting.

Brahms started sketching the Requiem in 1861 and completed it in 1868. While not directly inspired by any one particular incident, the composition was certainly influenced by events such as the death of Robert Schumann in 1856 and the illness and death of Brahms' mother in 1865. The work is not a memorial to any one person or even, despite the title, to the German people. Brahms considered several other titles, among them "A Human Requiem" which although not as poetic, is perhaps more apt.

In its original form the Requiem consisted of only six movements but the composer was not satisfied with its proportions and added the solo soprano movement (Section V) as a balance to the more dominant baritone sections. It is in this section that Brahms unquestionably paid tribute to his own mother.

The underlying conception of the text has been well expressed by Walter Niemann as follows:

"Blessed are they which mourn, for they shall be comforted. It is true that all flesh is as grass; it is true that every man must die one day. But death is not an eternal annihilation; the redeemed of the Lord shall obtain everlasting joy and gladness, and sorrow and sighing shall flee away. And therefore, we can say in the end; Blessed are the dead who die in the Lord."

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The Choral Society would like to thank Mr. and Mrs. Sidney Stone for the loan of their organ; also the University of New Mexico for the use of their orchestral scores.

The Society is also deeply indebted to the instrumentalists assisting in this performance.

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THE AUDIENCE IS ASKED TO KINDLY REFRAIN FROM
APPLAUDING AT THE CONCLUSION OF THIS WORK.

