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With the John Avison Chamber Orchestra

**Friday March 10, 2017**

## Programme Notes: Ein deutsches Requiem, Op. 45 - A German Requiem

### Wie lieblich sind deine Wohnungen, Herr Zebaoth

How lovely is your dwelling,  
Lord of hosts!

My soul desires and longs  
for the courts of the Lord:  
my body and soul cry out  
for the living God.

Blessed are they  
who dwell in your house:  
they praise you evermore!

*Psalm 84:1-2,4*

### Ihr habt nun Traurigkeit

You now are sorrowful;  
but I will see you again,  
and your heart shall rejoice,  
and your joy shall no man  
take from you.

*John 16:32*

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

*Isaiah 66:13*

Behold with your eyes,  
I have had, for a little time,  
sorrow and labour  
and have found great comfort.

*Ecclus. 51:27*

### Denn wir haben hie kleine bleibende Statt

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

*Hebrews 13:14*

Behold, I tell you a mystery;

we shall not all sleep,  
we shall however all be changed,  
and the selfsame suddenly,  
in the blink of an eye,  
at the time of the last trumpet.  
For the trumpet shall sound,  
And the dead shall  
Be raised incorruptible,  
and we shall be changed.  
Then shall be brought to pass  
the Word, which was written:  
Death is swallowed up in victory.  
O death, where is your sting?  
Hell, where is your victory?

*1 Corinthians 15:51-52, 53,55*

Lord, you are worthy  
to receive glory and honour and power,  
for you have created all things,  
and for thy pleasure  
they have their being  
and were created.

*Revelations 4:11*

### Selig sind die Toten, die in dem Herren sterben

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 follow after them.

*Revelations 14:11*

## THE NEW SEASON BROCHURE WILL BE AVAILABLE AT THE MARCH 10 AND MARCH 31 CONCERTS.

Dear Friends,

It has been a great pleasure putting together the 2017-2018 season.

We welcome wonderful young artists who are already enjoying significant international careers; such as the first prize winners of the Banff International String Quartet Competition and the piano sensation, Jan Lisiecki. Other guest artists include the great English tenor Charles Daniels, the fabulous Gryphon Trio and the Zodiac Trio with cellist Ariel Barnes.

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Warmly,

Elizabeth & Marcel



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**Programme Notes: Ein deutsches Requiem, Op. 45 - A German Requiem**

using it for tonight's performance. There exists a full volume of letters between the two friends which documents many of these informal soirées. Editor Hans Barkan captures the flavour of the relationship: "The music heard was discussed with Brahms on their walks and later in the evening after concerts and theatrical performance at a comfortable restaurant where good wine and good food were relished by both men, good cigars enjoyed, and their close friends welcome."

**Selig sind, die da Leid tragen**

Blessed are they that mourn;  
for they shall be comforted.

*Matthew 5:4*

They that sow in tears  
shall reap in joy,  
he that goes forth and weeps,  
and bears precious seed,  
and shall come again with rejoicing  
and bring his sheaves.

*Psalm 126:5-6*

**Denn alles Fleisch,  
es ist wie Gras**

For all flesh is like grass,  
and all the glory of man  
like the flower of the grass.  
The grass withers  
and the flower falls away.

*1 Peter 1:24*

Be patient therefore, brethren,  
unto the coming of the Lord.  
Behold, an husbandman waits  
for the precious fruit of the earth,  
and has patience for it, until he receives  
the morning rain and evening rain.

*James 5:7*

But the word of the Lord endures forever.

*1 Peter 1:25*

Those redeemed in the Lord  
shall come again,  
and come to Zion with rejoicing;  
everlasting joy will be upon their heads;  
they will obtain joy and gladness,  
and sorrow and sighing will flee away.

*Isaiah 35:10*

**Herr, lehre doch mich, daß ein  
Ende mit mir haben muß**

Lord, show me  
that I must come to an end of my days,  
and that my life has a conclusion  
and is thereby fleeting.  
Behold, my days are  
a mere handbreadth to you,  
and my lifetime is as nothing to you.  
Alas, man is like nothing at all  
as he goes through his life.

He goes to and fro like a phantom,  
and bustles about in vain disquiet;  
he heaps us wealth, not knowing  
who will get it.  
And now, Lord, what do I wait for?  
My hope is in you.

*Psalm 39:4-7*

But the souls of the righteous  
are in the hand of God,  
and no torment will touch them.

*Wisdom of Solomon 3:1*

**About the manuscript score:** The original score of the German Requiem was written on sheets of varying size and shape because (as Brahms enjoyed pointing out to his friends) it was composed when he was too poor to buy much paper. Whether or not this is merely a part of Brahms mythology, there is evidence to suggest that the success of the Requiem marked a turning point in his financial career. A more plausible explanation, though, is that the creation of the work took place over a number of years and thus led to the use of music paper from a variety of suppliers.

**About the various movements:** Between 1856 and 1866 a number of events occurred which profoundly moved Brahms, including the death of his friend and mentor Robert Schumann, the death of his mother, and the Austro-Prussian War. These probably inspired his desire to compose a requiem. The work, minus the soprano solo, was mostly completed in the summer of 1866. But some portions of the text had been arranged even earlier in a four-movement cantata in 1861, using thematic material from an unfinished symphony worked on at the time of Schumann's death. Brahms did not approach the work as a traditional Latin requiem mass with the usual liturgical text. Instead, he carefully selected excerpts from Luther's Bible which suited his personal goal of offering great comfort. No prayer is offered for the departed nor is the name of Christ used. His sole object was the consolation of the living. The title Ein deutsches Requiem was used simply because the text is in German, with no suggestion of nationalism implied in the music.

**About the first performances :** Now accepted as one of the greatest musical masterworks of all time, the Requiem initially had a mixed reception. A preview public performance of the first three movements in 1867 was evidently a disaster. However, the official premiere of the work (still not the full seven movements) conducted by Brahms himself in the cathedral at Bremen on Good Friday, 1868, was reportedly magnificent and really helped establish Brahms - now 35 years old - as an accepted master. Even a cool reception by Vienna's highly politicized "Mendelssohn faction" to a performance the following year, after the addition of the soprano solo, did not succeed in affecting Brahms' reputation which by then was solidly established.

**About Brahms and piano four-hands:** Brahms had a close friend - the distinguished surgeon (and accomplished pianist) Theodor Billroth - who followed the composer's career closely, attending the first performances of most new works as they came along. He also would hear previews of works in progress or recently finished in his own home. Following a custom among 19th-century music lovers, Brahms would often arrange his orchestral works for piano four-hands for these musical evenings at Billroth's. That may well be the genesis of the four-hands version (the composer's own) of the Requiem. This version was eventually published and we are

## The Anatomy of a Concert Tour

I think that most of us who attended the January concert by the Canadian Guitar Quartet were captivated by their amazing vitality and virtuosity. It was a doubly significant event for me because our White Rock concert was also the opening night of a concert tour of BC and Alberta which I had the unique pleasure of organizing. I thought you might be interested in an insight into how a tour of such scope is put together - the anatomy of a concert tour.

I was introduced to the CGQ by an old friend and colleague, Toronto-based concert manager, Richard Paul. It's a manager's job to represent his artists as forcefully as he can, and those of us on the "buying" side of the artistic fence sometimes view management hyperbole with a modicum of skepticism. For years I had resisted Richard's entreaties about this particular group, but then I heard them in a short showcase at a conference in Vancouver and decided that here was the perfect attraction for sophisticated audiences in larger centers and, at the same time - by the sheer popularity and ubiquity of the guitar - a group that was likely to appeal to smaller communities with less concert experience. A young, enthusiastic ensemble, in love with their instrument, determined to make music wherever they could, willing to work hard to present the guitar in a new classical light -- they were the right group for an extensive tour.

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That, of course, was just the beginning. We have an old adage in the concert world -- if you want to build a tour, then at some point you have to be willing to accept the first engagement that turns up! But here is the traditional dilemma. Communities may show potential interest in a tour but managers and their artists cannot risk undertaking huge expenses without assured results. So instead, they will offer a discounted fee in return for a commitment to pay for a minimum number of engagements, regardless of the tour organizer's success. That's what I undertook to do for the CGQ. Over two years ago, I committed to Richard Paul that I would guarantee to pay for a minimum of 12 engagements.

Filling such a commitment wasn't easy. Like White Rock, many of the concert societies have fixed days of the week when they must hold their concerts. White Rock, West Vancouver, Coquitlam, Chilliwack, Kelowna and Kaslo all need Fridays. Sechelt could only take Sunday. Langley, Abbotsford and Nelson insist on Saturdays and Kamloops has to have a Thursday. (I am working on creating a nine day week with three Fridays and two Saturdays, designed especially for concert tours; but no matter how hard I try, I end up with the regular number of weekend dates in any given three week period!)

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### In Autumn

Autumn is sad.  
And when the leaves are falling,  
sinks too the heart  
in troubles grief to have.  
Still is the field,  
and flown to Southwinds calling,  
are songsters, still,  
as to the grave.

Drear is the day,  
and pallid clouds are veiling,  
the sunlight as the spirit free.

Soon comes the night:  
then rest all powers empalling,  
oblivion falls on all that be.

Tender grows man.  
He sees the sun declining,  
divines, that life too  
as the year, must close.

Moist are the eyes,  
but through the teardrops shining,  
out flows the heart and  
holiest solace knows.

### Vier ungarische Tänze, WoO 1

These *Four Hungarian Dances* (No. 2, 3, 4 and 6) are drawn from 21 popular dances composed by Brahms and published as two sets in 1869 and 1880. Although many were subsequently orchestrated by Brahms himself and others, there is no doubt that they were originally intended for two pianists. The *Hungarian Dances* capitalized upon two musical trends of the 19th century. One was a love of dance-style pieces written for piano four-hands (a single piano played by two pianists). The other was for compositions inspired by European minority cultures, particularly the Roma (Gypsy) culture, often identified with folk music from Hungary. Both Hungarian-style and piano four-hands music made early entrances into the young composer's life. He discovered the excitement of Central European folk music as a youth and began writing piano duets while still in his 20s. His familiarity with piano four-hands music and his exposure to authentic Hungarian dances soon led him to try his hand at composing his own Hungarian-style pieces, for which he knew there would be a ready-made audience. Most of the dances are rapid, energetic pieces. Imitating the mercurial spirit of Hungarian folk music, some of the dances change tempo midway, as in the fourth dance, where a languid, melancholy introduction gives way to exuberance. (Thanks to Betsy *Schwarm* for these ideas. The enigmatic abbreviation WoO stands for *Werke ohne Opuszahl* - Works without Opus number - in the Brahms catalogue.)

INTERMISSION

The **Five Songs, Opus 104** are mature works, composed in 1888 shortly after the *Fourth Symphony* and the *Double Concerto for Violin, Cello and Orchestra*. They are exquisite miniatures expressed in the typical style of Brahms' old age: a resignation that ironically brings forth some of his most beautiful and touching music. The first two songs are settings of poems from Rückert's *Nachtwache* (Night-watch). The first ("Lightest tones of the heart") is a tender love lament, a dialogue between the men's and women's voices. The second, which was sung at the composer's funeral, rings out with the question, "Are they at rest?" The answer comes soft and grave, "They rest." The third song (Last Happiness), like the two that follow, deals with the idea of growing old, through the imagery of nature: "Lifeless falleth leaf on leaf..." Memories stir of springtimes past, serving only to underline the hopelessness. *Verlorene Jugend* (Lost Youth) alternates between brash youthfulness and tender nostalgia. The last song (In Autumn) also finds the heights of passionate emotion and the deepest, sweetest resignation.

**Night-watch (No. 1)**

Lightest tones of the heart,  
awoke by love's tender spirit,  
Breathe tremblingly forth,  
thee, haply open an ear,  
ope, one loving, fond heart,  
And should none there to thee open;  
Borne on nightwind, come, sighing  
to mine own return.

**Night-watch (No. 2)**

Rest they? there in the west,  
the watchman's horn is calling,  
and far eastward a horn calling replies:  
They rest, they rest!

Do you hear, timorous heart,  
the whispering voices of angels?  
Put out your lamp with good heart,  
lay yourself then peacefully down.

**Last Happiness**

Lifeless falleth leaf on leaf,  
Still and sadly downward streaming;  
All its hope to never receive,

Lives the heart in springtide dreaming.  
But abide one sunny ray  
on the last wild roses blowing,  
As oft one last happiness,  
one last loving hope, the hopeless showing.

**Lost Youth**

Every mountain ringing,  
All the wood a-tune,  
ah my youthful days,  
where are you so soon?

Youth and tender boyhood,  
flown no more to find;  
Days of youth so charming,  
careless was my mind!

And I lost thee lightly,  
As one took a stone  
And as idly hurling  
in the stream has thrown.

Wended ere a stone  
From out the deepest sea;  
Know with youth and boyhood  
That may never be.

In spite of that, I somehow created an itinerary. Some communities didn't get the night they wanted and others weren't able to take the attraction. Thank goodness for Parksville and Cranbrook where the Presenter will take any day of the week for their concerts. In the end I reported back to Richard Paul in Toronto with a very neat tour: 17 engagements in 21 days of touring. My guarantee was fulfilled with a risk-free tour for the CGQ.....but that was six months ago.

In the case of CGQ, it was clear that I was dealing with dedicated workaholics whose passion for their instrument would overcome many difficulties. Their response was "We want to play every day, so would you be kind enough to try to fill all those gaps in the tour?"

Putting a tour together is a bit like completing a gigantic jigsaw puzzle, with human beings as the moveable pieces! It was back to the drawing board and after three months of additional arranging, we ended up with 23 engagements - the artists would earn nearly double what they had anticipated! A collective audience of nearly 10,000 concert-goers would hear and enjoy the CGQ. The four young gentlemen from Ottawa would not only experience BC and Alberta's remarkable audience enthusiasm and warm personal hospitality - they would also acquire an unequalled knowledge of western Canadian geography.

# Celebrating his fifth anniversary.

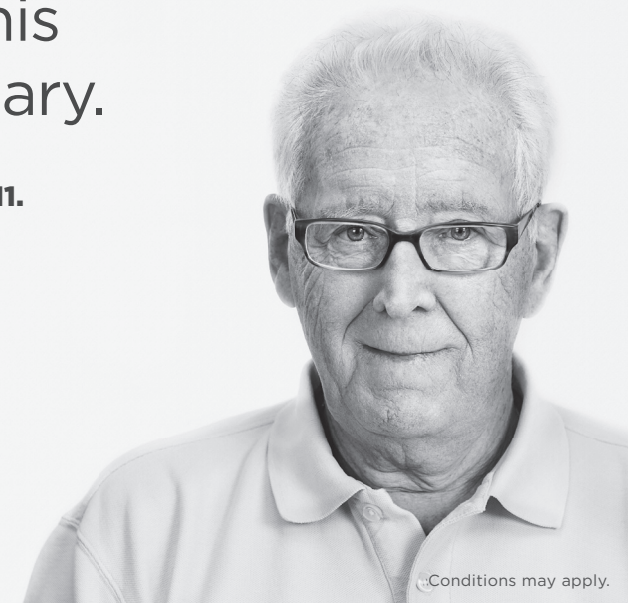
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---

**Brahms Requiem**

THE INTIMATE BRAHMS

---

**Fünf Gesänge, Op. 104 (1888)**

**Johannes Brahms (1833-1897)**

Nachtwache (Nr. 1)  
*Night-watch (No. 1)*

Nachtwache (Nr. 2)  
*Night-watch (No. 2)*

Letztes Glück  
*Last Happiness*

Verlorene Jugend  
*Lost Youth*

Im Herbst  
*In Autumn*

Vancouver Chamber Choir

**Vier ungarische Tänze, WoO 1 (1869)**

**Johannes Brahms**

No. 2 in D minor - Allegro non assai - Vivace

No. 3 in F major - Allegretto

No. 4 in F minor Poco sostenuto - Vivace

No. 6 in D flat major - Vivace

Bergmann Duo

INTERMISSION

**Ein deutsches Requiem, Op. 45 (1866)**

**Johannes Brahms**

Selig sind, die da Leid tragen  
*Blessed are they that mourn*

Denn alles Fleisch, es ist wie Gras  
*For all flesh is like grass*

Herr, lehre doch mich, daß ein Ende mit mir haben muß  
*Lord, show me that I must come to an end of my days*

Wie lieblich sind deine Wohnungen, Herr Zebaoth  
*How lovely is your dwelling, Lord of Hosts*

Ihr habt nun Traurigkeit  
*You now are sorrowful*

Denn wir haben hie keine bleibende Statt  
*For here we have no continuing place*

Selig sind die Toten, die in dem Herren sterben  
*Blessed are the dead which die in the Lord from henceforth*

Vancouver Chamber Choir  
Bergmann Duo

Steven Bélanger, baritone, Lorraine Reinhardt, soprano, George Roberts, baritone