Our next concert:

7:30pm Saturday 4th July 2025

St Mary's Church, Calne

A concert built around popular opera choruses

Why not come and sing with us? There is no audition, and you can try us out before deciding. We rehearse on most Mondays in Marden House, Calne.

www.calnechoral.co.uk

Registered Charity Number: 801131

Calne Choral

Brahms

A German Requiem

7:30pm

Saturday 28th March 2026

St Mary's Church, Calne

Programme

Programme Notes

A German Requiem by Johannes Brahms is one of the most moving choral works of the nineteenth century. Written between 1865 and 1868, it reflects Brahms' deep interest in human grief, comfort, and hope. Although it carries the traditional title "Requiem", the work is quite different from the Latin Requiem Mass. Instead of praying for the souls of the dead, Brahms chose texts from the German translation of the Bible to comfort the living.

Brahms began working on the piece during a difficult period in his life. The death of his mother in 1865 had a profound emotional impact on him, and many listeners feel that the work expresses his personal search for consolation. Some scholars also connect the work with the earlier death of his close friend and mentor, Robert Schumann. Whatever its precise inspiration, Brahms created a work that speaks to universal human experience.

The Requiem is scored for chorus, orchestra, soprano and baritone soloists. Tonight, we present it in a version for reduced orchestra. It is divided into seven movements, each exploring a different aspect of mourning and comfort. The opening movement begins not with fear or judgment, but with gentle reassurance: "Blessed are they that mourn, for they shall be comforted." Throughout the work, Brahms returns again and again to themes of peace, patience, and the promise of renewal.

Two solo movements form emotional highlights. The baritone solo in the third movement expresses the uncertainty of human life, asking, "Lord, let me know mine end". Later, the soprano solo in the fifth movement offers one of the most tender moments in the entire piece, with the words "You now have sorrow; but I will again behold you." Many listeners hear this movement as Brahms' personal tribute to his mother.

Musically, Brahms blends powerful choral writing with moments of great intimacy. He creates a sound world that is unmistakably his own - rich, warm, and deeply expressive.

Since its premiere in the late 1860s, *A German Requiem* has become one of Brahms' most beloved works. Its message transcends religious boundaries: rather than focusing on death itself, the music offers compassion, reflection, and ultimately a sense of quiet hope. Even today, audiences around the world find comfort in Brahms' powerful reminder that grief is part of being human - and that consolation can be found through music, community, and shared experience.

6. Denn wir haben hie keine bleibende Statt, sondern die zukünftige suchen wir. Siehe, ich sage euch ein Geheimnis: Wir werden nicht alle entschlafen, wir werden aber alle verwandelt werden; und dasselbige plötzlich, in einem Augenblick, zu der Zeit der letzten Posaune. Denn es wird die Posaune schallen, und die Toten werden auferstehen unverweslich, und wir werden verwandelt werden. Dann wird erfüllet werden das Wort, das geschrieben steht; Der Tod ist verschlungen in den Sieg. Tod, wo ist dein Stachel? Hölle, wo ist dein Sieg? Herr, du bist würdig, zu nehmen Preis und Ehre und Kraft, denn du hast alle Dinge geschaffen, und durch deinen Willen habe sie das Wesen und sind geschaffen.	6. *For we have here no abiding city, but we seek that to come.* Hebrews 13.14 *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 trumpet. For behold, the trumpet shall sound, and the dead 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 victory? O hell, where is thy sting?* 1 Cor 15.51 *Worthy art Thou, Lord, of praise and honour and power, for Thou, almighty, hast created all things, and because of thy will they exist and were created* Revelation 4.11
7. Selig sind die Toten, die in dem Herren sterben von nun an. Ja, der Geist spricht, dass sie ruhen von ihrer Arbeit, denn ihre Werke folgen ihnen nach.	7. *Blessed are the dead which die in the Lord from henceforth; even so, says the Spirit, for they rest from their labours; and their works follow after them.* Revelation 14.13

3. 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 Handbreit vor dir, und mein Leben ist wie nichts vor dir. Ach, wie gar nichts sind alle Menschen, die doch so sicher leben. Sie gehen daher wie ein Schemen und machen ihnen viel vergebliche Unruhe; sie sammeln und Wissen nicht, wer es kriegen wird. Nun, Herr, wes soll ich mich trösten? Ich hoffe auf dich. Der Gerechten Seelen sind in Gottes Hand, ind keine Qual rühret sie an.	3. *Lord, let me know mine end, and the number of my days; let me know how frail I am, that I be made sure how long I have to live. Surely, Thou hast made my days as an handbreadth before thee; and my lifetime is as nothing to thee; verily every man living is altogether vanity. For man walks as a shadow, and he disquiets himself in vain; yea, all in vain; his riches, he knows not who shall gather them. Now, Lord, what then do I hope for? My hope is in Thee.* Psalm 39.4 *But the righteous souls are in the hand of God, and there shall no torment touch them.* Wisdom 3.1
4. Wie lieblich sind deine Wohnungen, Herr Zebaoth! Meine Seele verlanget und sehnet sichnbach den Vorhöfen des Herrn; mein Leib und Seele freuen sich in dem lebendigen Gott. Wohl denen, die in deinem Hause wohnen, die loben dich immerdar.	4. *How lovely are thy dwellings fair, O Lord of Hosts! My soul longs, yea longs and faints for the courts of the Lord. My heart and flesh ring out their joy unto the living God. Blessed are they that dwell in thy house; they praise thee, Lord, evermore.* Psalm 84.1
5. Ihr habt nun Traurigkeit; aber ich will euch wiedersehen, und euer Herz soll sich freuen, und eure Freude soll niemand von euch nehmen. Sehet mich an: Ich habe eine kleine Zeit Mühe und Arbeit gehabt und habe grossen Trost funden. Ich will euch trösten, wie eien seine Mutter tröstet.	5. *You now have sorrow; but I will again behold you, and your heart shall rejoice, and your joy shall no man take from you*. John 16.22 *Behold, see how for a little while labour and toil were my lot, yet I have found much comfort.* Ecclesiasticus 51.27 *I will comfort you as one whom his mother comforts*. Isaiah 66.13

Ein Deutsches Requiem - *A German Requiem*

Johannes Brahms (1833-1897)

Conductor: **James Green**

Soprano Solo: **Alice Gold**

Bass Solo: **Shaun Holley**

Orchestra:

Flute	**Tim Fosker**
Oboe	**Simon Harris**
Clarinet	**Emily Farren**
Violin	**Tessa Welford**
Viola	**Daisy Tolley**
'Cello	**Ruth Jordan**
Double Bass	
Piano	**Jemima Palfreyman**

Choir Members

Soprano: Jackie Ball, Sarah Beach, Emmy Butcher, Wendy Carter, Ruth Chadwick, Rosemary Devlin, Jill Downey, Madelaine Flight, Sally Fox, Jane Giles, Giselle Parker-Hadfield, Caroline Potter, Jenny Reynolds, Rosemary Ringrose, Anne Rumming, Margaret Thorne, Hilary Wright.

Alto: Fee Blackburn, Helen Davies, Wendy Halls, Carole Hill, Fiona Lockwood, Sylvia Newton, Jenny Phillips, Mary Pitcher-Clayton, Ann Stiff, Karen Taylor, Elizabeth Lloyd-Davies, Margaret Pearce, Mairi Telford, Margaret Waters, Carol Watkinson

Tenor: Stephen Butcher, Trevor Dahl, David Gillett, Tony Jones, Julie Spencer, George Tedbury.

Bass: Richard Aldhous, Ewen Bird, Eric Brakes, Caspar Bush, Simon Chadwick, Maurice Chandler, Anthony Foster, Simon Hopkins, Fearnley Martin, Mike Morison.

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Ein Deutsches Requiem
A German Requiem

1 Choir Selig sind, die da Leid tragen
Blessed are they that mourn, for they shall be comforted

2 Choir Denn alles Fleich, es ist wie Gras
Behold all flesh is as grass

3 Bass solo and Choir
Herr, lehre doch mich
Lord, let me know mine end and the number of my days

4 Choir Wie lieblich sind deine Wohnungen
How lovely are thy dwellings fair

5 Soprano solo and Choir
Ihr habt nun Traurigkeit
You now have sorrow

6 Bass solo and Choir
Denn wir haben hie keine bleibende Statt
For we have here no abiding city

7 Choir Selig sind die Toten
Blessed are the dead

Ein Deutsches Requiem	***A German Requiem***
1. Selig sind, die da Leid tragen, denn sie sollen getröstet werden.	1. *Blessed are they that mourn, for they shall be comforted.* Matt 5.4
Die mit Tränen säen, werden mit Freuden ernten. Sie gehen hin und weinen und tragen edlen Samen und kommen mit Freuden und bringen ihre Garben.	*They that sow in tears shall reap in joy. Who goes forth and weeps, and bears precious seed, shall come again rejoicing, and bring his sheaves with him.* Ps 126
2. Denn alles Fleish es ist wie Gras, und alle Herrlichkeit des Menschen wie des Grases Blumen. Das Gras ist verdorret und die Blume abgefallen.	2. *Behold, all flesh is as grass, and all the glory of man is as the flower of the field. The grass is withered, and the flower thereof is fallen.* 1 Peter 1.24
So seid nun geduldig, lieben Brüder, bis auf die Zukunft des Herrn. Siehe, ein Ackermann wartet auf die köstliche Frucht der Erde und ist geduldig darüber, bis er empfang den Morgenregen und Abendregen.	*Now therefore be patient, my brethren, unto the coming of the Lord. See how the husbandman waits for the precious fruit of the earth, and has long patience for it, till it receive in time the morning and evening rain.* James 5.7
Aber des Herrn Wort bleibet in Ewigkeit.	*But yet the Lord's word stands for ever.* 1 Peter 1.2
Die Erlöseten des Herrn werden wiederkommen und gen Zion kommen mit Jauchzen; ewige Freude wird über ihrem Haupte sein; Freude und Wonne werden sie ergreifen, und Schmerz und Seufzen wird weg müssen.	*And the ransomed of the Lord shall return again, and come with singing unto Zion. Everlasting joy shall be upon their heads always, gladness and joy everlasting shall they obtain, and sorrow and sighing shall flee away.* Isaiah 35.10