

GRANT PARK MUSIC FESTIVAL

Carlos Kalmar Artistic Director and Principal Conductor

Christopher Bell Chorus Director



Friday, July 21, 2023 at 6:30 p.m

Saturday, July 22, 2023 at 7:30 p.m.

Jay Pritzker Pavilion

BRAHMS REQUIEM

Grant Park Orchestra and Chorus

Carlos Kalmar, conductor

Christopher Bell, chorus director

Maeve Höglund, soprano

Hugh Russell, baritone

Joel Thompson

Seven Last Words of the Unarmed

"Officers, why do you have your guns out?" (Kenneth Chamberlain)

"What are you following me for?" (Trayvon Martin)

"Mom, I'm going to college." (Amadou Diallo)

"I don't have a gun! Stop shooting!" (Michael Brown)

"You shot me. You shot me!" (Oscar Grant III)

"It's not real." (John Crawford)

"I can't breathe!" (Eric Garner)

INTERMISSION

Johannes Brahms

A German Requiem

Blessed are they that mourn

For all flesh is as grass

Lord, teach me

How lovely are thy dwelling places

You now have sorrow

For we have here

Blessed are the dead

MAEVE HÖGLUND

HUGH RUSSELL

The Elizabeth Morse Charitable Trust has generously
sponsored this program.

Tonight's concert is presented as part of
the Dehmlow Choral Music Series.

Organ provided by Triune Music/S.B. Smith & Associates



THE GRANT PARK CHORUS

The Grant Park Chorus was formed in 1962 by Thomas Peck, who led the ensemble until his passing in 1994. He was succeeded by his protégé, Michael Cullen, who served as chorus director until 1997. In 2002, after a series of prominent guest conductors, the Festival selected the current chorus director, Christopher Bell. Bell readies an ensemble ranging from 60 to 90 singers for all choral concerts, in addition to serving as a resident conductor at the Festival. During the 2023 season, the Grant Park Chorus includes four singers from the Festival Vocal Fellowship, a training program for young professionals designed to increase diversity in the field of classical and choral music.

Winners of the Margaret Hillis Award for artistic excellence, the Grant Park Chorus is a fully professional ensemble with a majority of the vocalists working and living in Illinois. In addition to making frequent solo appearances and holding teaching positions in area music schools, universities, and private studios, members of the Grant Park Chorus perform with Lyric Opera of Chicago, Chicago a cappella, Music of the Baroque, and the Chicago Symphony Chorus.

During the 2023 Festival, the chorus performs Dvořák's *Stabat Mater* (June 16-17), an American Songs tribute at the South Shore Cultural Center (June 26) and the Columbus Park Refectory (June 27), a concert of classics, including Mozart's *Ave verum corpus*, Fauré's *Cantique de Jean Racine*, and Poulenc's *Gloria* (July 7-8); Johannes Brahms' *A German Requiem* with Joel Thomspson's *Seven Last Words of the Unarmed* (July 21-22); Bravo Broadway (July 28-29), and a rarity by Felix Mendelssohn: *The First Walpurgis Night* (August 18-19).



In her recent performance of *Le nozze di Figaro* with Opera Maine, *Opera News* proclaimed, “**Maeve Höglund** was a charming, feisty Susanna, and her stellar soprano brightened the ensembles.” A native of Olympia, Washington, Maeve was trained in piano, theater, and dance. Her exposure to both musical and dramatic theatre inspired a desire to master vocal technique, leading her to study classical singing and opera. She received her bachelor of music degree in voice from the New England Conservatory in Boston and master’s degree from Manhattan School of Music in New York City.



Baritone **Hugh Russell** has performed with major orchestras and opera companies across North America, Europe and beyond, including the Philadelphia and Cleveland Orchestras and Los Angeles Opera. As a pianist, he has been featured in performance with Stephanie Blythe and Christine Brewer. In the coming season, Hugh will be featured in performance with pianist Craig Terry, and will return to North Carolina Opera to perform Papageno in *Die Zauberflöte*. He will also return to the New Mexico Philharmonic to perform his signature work, Orff’s *Carmina Burana*.

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JOEL THOMPSON (b. 1988)

***SEVEN LAST WORDS OF THE UNARMED* (2014)**

Scored for: three flutes including piccolo, three oboes including English horn, three clarinets including bass clarinet, two bassoons, four French horns, two trumpets, two trombones, timpani, percussion, harp, celesta, strings, and chorus

Performance time: 16 minutes

First Grant Park Orchestra performance

Since Eric Garner's tragic death at the hands of police in 2014, "I can't breathe" has become a rallying cry for the Black Lives Matter movement and those seeking police reform. It now sees powerful musical treatment in Joel Thompson's cantata *Seven Last Words of the Unarmed*. Mirroring the many musical settings of the Seven Last Words of Christ on the Cross, the piece takes its text from the final words uttered by seven Black men killed by police and other vigilantes: Kenneth Chamberlain, Trayvon Martin, Amadou Diallo, Michael Brown, Oscar Grant, John Crawford, and Eric Garner. After the deaths of Eric Garner and Michael Brown in 2014, Thompson channeled his grief and anger into this composition. Thompson, then a twenty-five-year-old with a master's degree in choral conducting, didn't consider himself a composer, so he never thought the piece would see the light of day.

But when Freddie Gray died in police custody the following year, Thompson was inspired to revisit the piece. He sent the score to Dr. Eugene Rogers, the director of choral activities at the University of Michigan. Though deeply moved by the piece, Rogers was wary about performing it with a group of mostly non-African American singers. As he expected, when he premiered the work with the University of Michigan Men's Glee Club in November 2015, opinion was sharply divided. Some audience members even stormed out of the performance, ripping up their programs as they left. Since then, the work has gained critical acclaim and more widespread acceptance among audiences, especially amid the national reckoning following George Floyd's murder in 2020.

Originally scored for tenor and bass choir, piano, and strings, *Seven Last Words of the Unarmed* has since been arranged for full mixed choir and orchestra. In the first movement, "Officers, why do you have your guns out?," the voices rise from a funeral figure in the orchestra. The movement encapsulates "the sense of gloom that arises upon the news of the death of another unarmed black man," Thompson explains in his program note. "What are you following me for?" uses complex imitative counterpoint to capture Trayvon Martin's panicked last moments as well as "the daily paranoia of the black experience." "Mom, I'm going to college" then presents a hauntingly beautiful baritone solo over the soft undulations of the orchestra. Anger finally boils over in the agitated rhythms of "I don't have a gun! Stop shooting." Underneath the cacophony of aleatoric expressions of "You shot me. You shot me!" is the pulsing of a single note in the orchestra, which persists "unflinchingly like a heart monitor until the end." This heart monitor carries over into "It's not real," breaking the reverie of the soaring voices above. Finally, in "I can't breathe," Thompson writes, "After using a mournful Byzantine texture for the first half of the movement, I tried to capture the panicked death thralls of asphyxiation in the music."



JOHANNES BRAHMS (1833 - 1897)

EIN DEUTSCHES REQUIEM, OP.45 [A GERMAN REQUIEM] (1857)

Scored for: three flutes including piccolo, two oboes, two clarinets, three bassoons, contrabassoon, four French horns, two trumpets, three trombones, tuba, timpani, two harps, strings, solo soprano, solo baritone, chorus

Performance time: 68 minutes

First Grant Park Orchestra performance: August 14, 1976; Pavle Despalj, conductor and Janice Hutson, soprano; William Diana, baritone

Before composing his *German Requiem*, Johannes Brahms had been living in the shadow of a grand proclamation made by his friend and mentor, Robert Schumann. In an article published in a widely read music journal in 1853, Schumann declared in flowery language that Brahms was destined for greatness and should “direct his magic wand where the massed forces of chorus and orchestra may lend him their power.” Though this laudatory review helped launch the young composer’s career, it posed somewhat of a psychological burden. Brahms would not complete his first symphony for another twenty years, though he made repeated attempts.

Brahms finally fulfilled Schumann’s directive to write for orchestra and chorus in 1865. Profoundly shaken by the death of his mother in February of that year, Brahms set to work on a requiem, completing six movements by the summer of 1866. When the first three movements premiered in Vienna in 1867, they received mixed reviews. However, the enthusiastic response he received when all six movements premiered in Bremen in 1868 led him to add what would become the fifth movement, “You now have sorrow.” The international success Brahms’ *German Requiem* gained after its full premiere in 1869 solidified his reputation and proved he had lived up to Schumann’s high expectations.

Brahms’ *German Requiem* is not a conventional requiem in the style of those by Mozart, Berlioz, or countless others. Instead of using liturgical Latin text from the Catholic Mass for the dead, Brahms assembled passages from Luther’s German translation of the Bible, hence the title “German Requiem.” In his text selections, Brahms intentionally avoids any mention of Christ or redemption after death and instead focuses on the transience of life and the human need for consolation. As such, the work is not a requiem for the dead but a comfort for the living. This decision also lends the *German Requiem* more of a universal sentiment than a specifically religious one. In fact, Brahms wrote, “As far as the text is concerned, I will confess that I would very gladly omit the ‘German’...and simply put ‘of Humankind.’”

In the nineteenth century, there was an increased interest in the music of the past and its value in creating new works. Few composers embraced this idea more than Brahms. He could often be found in libraries and secondhand music stores, scouring the shelves for old manuscripts and rare scores. His study of the works of past masters enriched his own compositions, especially the *German Requiem*, which shows great variety and historical awareness in its choral writing. For instance, the unaccompanied choral passages in the first movement demonstrate Brahms’ knowledge of Renaissance polyphony. This texture contrasts with the stark homophony of “Denn alles Fleisch es ist wie Gras” in the second movement, which appears as a funeral march in triple meter. Providing structural symmetry, both the second and sixth movements end in

grand Baroque fugues, while the beloved fourth movement, "Wie lieblich sind deine Wohnungen," presents a gentle Viennese waltz.

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Thompson Seven Last Words of the Unarmed

1. Kenneth Chamberlain

"Officers, why do you have your guns out?"

2. Trayvon Martin

"What are you following me for?"

3. Amadous Diallo

"Mom, I'm going to college."

4. Michael Brown

"I don't have a gun! Stop shooting!"

5. Oscar Grant III

"You shot me. You shot me!"

6. John Crawford

"It's not real."

7. Eric Garner

"I can't breathe!"

Brahms A German Requiem

1. Chorus. Selig sind die da Leid tragen

Selig sind, die da Leid tragen,
denn sie sollen getröstet werden.
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.

2. Chorus. Denn alles Fleisch es ist wie Gras

Denn alles Fleisch ist wie Gras
und alle Herrlichkeit des Menschen
wie des Grases Blumen.
Das Gras ist verdorret
und die Blume abgefallen.

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 empfahe den Morgenregen und Abendregen.
Aber des Herrn Wort bleibet in Ewigkeit.

Die Erlöseten des Herrn werden wieder kommen,
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.

3. Solo and Chorus. Herr, lehre doch mich

Herr, lehre doch mich,
daß ein Ende mit mir haben muß,
und mein Leben ein Ziel hat,
und ich davon muß.

1. Chorus. Blessed are they that mourn

Blessed are they that mourn,
for they shall be comforted.
They who sow in tears,
shall reap in joy.
Go forth and cry,
bearing precious seed,
and come with joy
bearing their sheaves.

2. Chorus. For all flesh is as grass

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

Therefore be patient, dear brothers,
for the coming of the Lord.
Behold, the husbandman waits
for the delicious fruits of the earth
and is patient for it, until he receives
the morning rain and evening rain.
But the word of the Lord endures for eternity.

The redeemed of the Lord will come again,
and come to Zion with a shout;
eternal joy shall be upon her head;
They shall take joy and gladness,
and sorrow and sighing must depart.

3. Solo and Chorus. Lord, teach me

Lord, teach me
That I must have an end,
And my life has a purpose,
and I must accept this.

Siehe, meine Tage sind
einer Hand breit 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
und keine Qual rühret sie an.

4. Chorus. Wie lieblich sind deine Wohnungen

Wie lieblich sind deine Wohnungen,
Herr Zebaoth!
Meine Seele verlangt und sehnet sich
nach 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!

5. Solo and Chorus. Ihr habt nun Traurigkeit

Ihr habt nun Traurigkeit;
aber ich will euch wieder sehen
und euer Herz soll sich freuen

Behold, my days are
as a handbreadth before Thee,
and my life is as nothing before Thee.
Alas, as nothing are all men,
but so sure the living.
They are therefore like a shadow,
and go about vainly in disquiet;
they collect riches, and do not know
who will receive them.
Now, Lord, how can I console myself?
My hope is in Thee.

The righteous souls are in God's hand
and no torment shall stir them.

4. Chorus. How lovely are thy dwelling places

How lovely are thy dwelling places,
O Lord of Hosts!
My soul requires and yearns for
the courts of the Lord;
My body and soul rejoice
in the living God.
Blessed are they that dwell in thy house;
they praise you forever!

5. Solo and Chorus. You now have sorrow

You now have sorrow;
but I shall see you again
and your heart shall rejoice

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GRANT PARK
MUSIC FESTIVAL

und eure Freude soll niemand von euch nehmen.

Ich will euch trösten,
Wie einen seine Mutter tröstet.
Sehet mich an:
Ich habe eine kleine Zeit
Mühe und Arbeit gehabt
und habe großen Trost funden.

6. Solo and Chorus. Denn wir haben hie

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 erschaffen,
und durch deinen Willen haben sie
das Wesen und sind geschaffen

7. Chorus. Selig sind die Toten

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.

and your joy no one shall take from you.

I will console you,
as one is consoled by his mother.
Behold me:
I have had for a little time
toil and torment,
and now have found great consolation

6. Solo and Chorus. For we have here

For we have here no continuing city,
but we seek the future.
Behold, I show you a mystery:
We shall not all sleep,
but we all shall be changed
and suddenly, in a moment,
at the sound of the last trombone.
For the trombone shall sound,
and the dead shall be raised incorruptible,
and we shall be changed.
Then shall be fulfilled
The word that is written:
Death is swallowed up in victory.
O Death, where is thy sting?
O Hell, where is thy victory?
Lord, Thou art worthy to receive all
praise, honor, and glory,
for Thou hast created all things,
and through Thy will
they have been and are created.

7. Chorus. Blessed are the dead

Blessed are the dead
that die in the Lord
from henceforth.
Yea, saith the spirit,
that they rest from their labors,
and their works shall follow them

VIOLINS OF HOPE

This performance of the Brahms requiem features musicians of the Grant Park Orchestra playing instruments from Violins of Hope, a private collection of violins, violas, and cellos restored and maintained by the father-son luthiers Amnon and Avshalom Weinstein. These instruments once belonged to Jewish musicians before and during the Holocaust, some adorned with six-sided stars, honor traditions nearly extinguished by the pogrom. Today musicians worldwide play the instruments in the spirit of hope and remembrance. Hosted by JCC Chicago, the Violins of Hope are on tour in Chicagoland and surrounding areas through September 2023.