A Month of Uplifting Music

Dear Friends and Supporters of the YSO:

As we continue along with our 2014-15 season, Heavenly Thoughts, and look ahead to the next two concerts, one might think that we are in store for a lot of dark, somber music. After all, the next two concerts include Día de los Muertos (the Day of the Dead) and not one but two requiems! But, as the old saying goes, ‘you can’t judge a book by its cover.’ Contrary to superficial appearances, both of these concerts include some extremely uplifting, joyous, and delightful music.

Día de los Muertos

We will start our annual Día de los Muertos concert at the Seasons Performance Hall with our traditional opener for this concert, Richard Meyer’s composition of the same name. This is a fun and energetic piece that characterizes the celebratory nature of Día de los Muertos festivals in Mexico. Next we will perform Le Tombeau de Couperin by the brilliant French composer Maurice Ravel. While the literal translation of the title is ‘The Tomb of Couperin,’ the more practical English title would be ‘Homage to Couperin.’ François Couperin was a master of the Baroque period and this piece represents Ravel’s early 20th-century take on Couperin’s style. Also on the program will be one of Mozart’s most beautiful piano concertos, No. 23 in A Major, performed by Gerardo Sánchez Lara, director of outreach for the Conservatorio de las Rosas in Yakima’s sister city of Morelia, Mexico. Finally, we have the innovative Symphony No. 7 “The Earthly and Divine in Human Life” by Louis Spohr, a contemporary of Beethoven, written for two orchestras; one representing the ‘earthly’ and the other representing the ‘divine’.

Sublime Solace

On the Yakima Valley Classical Series, our November Sublime Solace program will feature the Yakima Symphony Chorus and the Mid-Columbia Mastersingers as well as two terrific vocal soloists, Alexandra Picard and David Krohn, in the beautiful German Requiem by Johannes Brahms. Unlike most requiems that deal with judging the dead, this one focuses on comforting the living. As a result, it is one of the most peaceful, consoling, and uplifting pieces of music ever written. The orchestra will also perform Benjamin Britten’s exciting instrumental masterwork Sinfonia da Requiem. Again, not a typical requiem, this 1940 piece is actually a conscientious objector’s protest against World War II.

We look forward to seeing you on October 25th and November 8th as we continue on with our season of Heavenly Thoughts!

Lawrence Golan
The Helen N. Jewett Music Director
Yakima Symphony Orchestra
**Lunch With Lawrence**

Friday, November 7  
11:30am – 1:00pm  
Zesta Cucina Restaurant, $25

Join Maestro Lawrence Golan for a lovely light lunch and convivial conversation about the pieces and composers featured in the YSO’s *Sublime Solace* concert on November 8. Please contact the YSO office (509-248-1414) or info@ysomusic.org to place your ticket order.

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**ConcertTalk**

6:30pm  
October 25  
Main Hall / Seasons Performance Hall  
November 8  
Robertson Room / The Capitol Theatre

Join YSO Principal Horn Jeff Snedeker before the YSO’s *Día de los Muertos* and *Sublime Solace* concerts for an inside look at the evenings’ programs. Dr. Snedeker’s extensive knowledge of music and entertaining style of presentation bring the music and the circumstances of each program’s creation to life. ConcertTalk is well attended, so arrive early for a good seat!

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**Open Rehearsal**

Saturday, November 8 • 10:30am – 1:00pm • The Capitol Theatre

See the final touches being put on the evening’s program! Our dress rehearsals for The Yakima Valley Classical Series concerts at the Capitol Theatre are open to the public, and FREE to those who bring a canned food donation to benefit Northwest Harvest. Cash donations to the YSO are also welcome. Ideal for families and for other patrons unable to attend evening concerts.

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**Our Crusade**

As Maestro Golan sang in our opening *Broadway Blockbusters* show last month, and as I have mentioned from stage at each of the last two performances, the YSO is on a crusade to bring live orchestral music to an ever-growing audience throughout the Yakima Valley. 

*For those subscribers who have not yet been able to attend one of our performances this season, this message is especially for you!*

We have noted that, for any given main-stage performance, somewhere between 200-250 tickets that have been pulled and distributed have gone unused. That’s a lot of empty seats.

We realize that it’s not always easy to find friends to give tickets to when you’re planning to be away or have other commitments—probably because all your friends already have tickets (right…?). If you have tickets that you cannot use, we would like to encourage you to help us share our outstanding performances with those who might otherwise not have YSO on their daily radar; from the receptionist at your dental appointment to a complete stranger in line at the supermarket, we’d love to see your otherwise unused tickets go to anyone who promises to come. Having 200 new audience members personally invited to each of our concerts is arguably even more effective marketing than an intensive traditional media barrage—there’s nothing like the concert experience itself to explain what we do and why it’s important!

As always, you can also deliver extra tickets for upcoming performances to the Capitol Theatre box office as a donation (please specify whether they are for free distribution or for resale), but if you’re short on time or just have the inclination to brighten someone’s day I hope you’ll join in our crusade and help make new friends for the YSO. See you at the concerts!

David Rogers, Executive Director  
Yakima Symphony Orchestra
Affiliate & Partnership Updates

Yakima Youth Symphony Orchestra (YYSO) &
Yakima Ensemble for Strings (YES!) www.yyso.org
Bruce Walker, YYSO Conductor and YSO Cover Conductor
Christy Baisinger, YES! Conductor

Join the YYSO and YES! at their annual Halloween Spooktacular concert.
Sunday, October 26th at 3:00pm at the Seasons Performance Hall.
FREE! Come in costume!

Yakima Symphony Chorus (YSC)
Dr. Scott Peterson, Chorusmaster

The Yakima Symphony Chorus had very successful auditions on September 23rd and welcomes 11 new voices for the remainder of the season! We are always looking for more singers, so if you are interested in seeing the Capitol Theatre from the other side, contact Tanya Knickerbocker at knickerb@gmail.com!

Our upcoming concert includes a major choral work, A German Requiem by Brahms. We will be joined by the Mid-Columbia Mastersingers, led by Justin Raffa, which will give us a chorus of over 100 voices! Please join us for this unique collaboration!

Yakima Music en Acción (YAMA)
Stephanie Hsu, Director

A new year of YAMA programming is underway at Garfield Elementary School! At the beginning of our second full year, we have 51 students in two orchestras—from Garfield and three other elementary schools as well as returning students from three middle schools—making music and learning together for two hours every day after school.

Through a new YAMA Leadership Program, our advanced students are not only serving as mentors and coaches for our beginning students, they are also performing in orchestras outside of YAMA, including the Yakima Ensemble for Strings (YES!), and receiving private instruction and mentoring from YSO Teaching Artists Denise Dillenbeck, Jennifer Moultine and Josh Gianola.

Our first performance of the season will take place later this month in collaboration with Catholic Charities Housing Services:
Thursday, October 30 at 3:30pm
Blessed Kateri Village, 1000 S. Kateri Lane, Wapato

For more information about YAMA, contact Program Director Stephanie Hsu: s.hsu@yvoic.org.

Inaugural Multimedia Enhancements Sponsor

The 2014-15 Heavenly Thoughts season marks the inaugural YSO Multimedia Enhancements Sponsorship, made possible through the generosity of Roger and Beverly Vandiver. Through this sponsorship, a performance becomes multifacetedly enhanced as images and captions provide “real time” program notes and visual prompts and cues to both guide and stir the concert experience.

Meet The Orchestra!

Children learn what they live…
The YSO joins the Yakima Valley Museum on the first Wednesday of each month at their children’s story hour. FREE!
10:00am at the Yakima Valley Museum
OCTOBER 1: Theme - Mozart
NOVEMBER 5: Theme - Brahms
Gerardo Sánchez Lara

Gerardo Sánchez Lara was born in Mexico City in 1975 and moved to Michoacán State when he was six years old. He began his studies at Escuela Popular de Bellas Artes at the Universidad Michoacana de San Nicolás de Hidalgo, with Maestro Eduardo Montes y Arroyo. He received his Preparatory Diploma in Music from the Conservatorio de las Rosas in Morelia, and continued there to earn a Bachelor of Music degree summa cum laude in piano performance. His teachers were Eduardo Montes, Olga Chkourak, Gellya Dubrova and Cuauhtémoc Trejo. Sánchez pursued major studies at the Centro Nacional de las Artes under the guidance of Arturo Uruchurtu, and under Manuel Carra and Antonio Iglesias in Santiago de Compostela, Spain.

Sánchez has received scholarships from the State Foundation for Culture and Arts of Michoacán, and grants from numerous public institutions. He has been featured as soloist with the Michoacán Symphony Orchestra and the Universidad Michoacana Chamber Orchestra; this evening marks his third appearance with the Yakima Symphony Orchestra, sponsored by the Morelia-Yakima Sister City Association. An active performer, Sánchez has appeared as soloist at the International Contemporary Music Festival of Morelia, International Percussion Festival of Monterrey, FUSION International Contemporary Music Festival in San José de Costa Rica, and as part of the Guest Recital Series at Texas Christian University in Fort Worth. Currently he teaches music pedagogy, piano and history at the Conservatorio de las Rosas, where he is head of the academic outreach department.

El Conservatorio de las Rosas

The Yakima Symphony Orchestra is proud to collaborate with the Conservatorio de las Rosas, which lies in the heart of our sister city of Morelia, Mexico, providing a complete education in music and theater from pre-school through the university level. The conservatory’s history extends back to the founding of a girls’ college, Santa Rosa of Santa Maria, in 1743; the conservatory’s modern programs began under the leadership of composer Miguel Bernal Jiménez in the mid-twentieth century.

At present, the Conservatorio de las Rosas is led by Luis Jaime Cortez, with a staff of nearly 80 including 60 music specialists serving more than 800 students on two campuses. A fundamental axis of the musical life of Mexico, the conservatory organizes over 100 concerts per year and hosts several annual national events. Graduates of the conservatory have continued into postgraduate programs at universities in the United States and Europe and have garnered awards at international competitions, and many hold prominent positions in music throughout Mexico.

Over the past decade, the YSO has hosted a series of exceptional student and faculty musicians from the university and high school levels of the conservatory; in addition to their performances during YSO concerts, these musicians have served as ambassadors for music and for Morelia at schools, colleges and other locations around the Yakima Valley. We are grateful for the assistance of the Yakima-Morelia Sister City Association in making this partnership possible.

Program Notes

This year’s Día de los Muertos performance includes one of Mozart’s most beautiful piano concertos and an “Earthly and Divine” symphony by a contemporary of Beethoven.

Richard Meyer
(born June 22, 1957)
Día de los Muertos for string orchestra and percussion
(2004)

Richard Meyer is a school music teacher and award-winning composer of works for young ensembles. Día de los Muertos was commissioned and premiered by Ron Polomchak and the Lake Zurich (IL) Middle School South orchestra. Día de los Muertos is a festive piece depicting different aspects of Day of the Dead celebrations. The Dies irae chant from the Requiem mass is used as a theme in sad and energetic guises. The celebrations include depictions of processions and dances of angelitos and hobbling little old men, ending in a flurry of fun and high energy.

(Joseph-)Maurice Ravel
(March 7, 1875 – December 28, 1937)
Le tombeau de Couperin
(1917/1919)

Born to a Swiss father and Basque mother, Ravel was raised in Paris, attended the Paris Conservatoire, and became quite well-known as a composer of songs and piano pieces by age 30. Ravel’s music reflects several influences—Debussy’s style was an early one, but his later works show a very different approach, neoclassicism, a style that mixed old and new elements. Le tombeau de Couperin (A piece in memory of Couperin), first a piano composition (1917) and later orchestrated (1919), is a neoclassical piece.

The overall title refers to the famous Couperin family, several members of whom were musicians and composers,
Program Notes

Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart
(January 27, 1756 – December 5, 1791)
Piano Concerto No. 23 in A major, K. 488
(1786)

Mozart reached the height of his musical powers in the 1780s in Vienna, resulting in an almost continuous stream of quality works in every genre. Piano concertos were a particularly effective vehicle for success—not only did he receive credit as the composer, but he was also frequently the soloist, doubling their impact on his reputation (and income). His twenty-third piano concerto was completed on March 2, 1786, about the same time he completed his opera, The Marriage of Figaro. It was premiered on a subscription concert he gave that spring, with the solo part probably played by Mozart himself.

The first movement has a double exposition, a common feature of this period, with the orchestra presenting the primary themes first, followed by the same material played by the soloist. The soloist then elaborates on these materials. The development is conversational but the piano definitely dominates. The recapitulation also features the soloist, with increasing technical demands leading to a cadenza and surprisingly reserved ending.

The second movement is sentimental and lyrical, in a burnished minor harmony, with the piano handling the majority of the thematic interest. The middle section brightens a bit, as if experiencing a fond memory, but the nostalgic mood returns for an ending tinged with sorrow. The third movement has an upbeat recurring theme that appears in a variety of keys. The soloist and orchestra take turns and then come together a number of times, with the emphasis on the piano’s virtuosic capabilities. The contrasts are quite surprising, adding to increasing excitement as the piece builds to a satisfying close.

This concerto is not quite the “struggle” between virtuoso and orchestra seen in the nineteenth century, but the role of the piano soloist in “one-upping” the orchestra, e.g., the number of notes, adding ornamentation to melodies, and steering the piece to more remote keys, is definitely moving in that direction.

Louis (Ludwig) Spohr
(April 5, 1784 – October 22, 1859)
Symphony No. 7 in C major, op. 121
“Iritisches und Göttliches im Menschenleben”
(The Earthly and Divine in Human Life)
(1841)

Spohr was a German composer, violinist and conductor who was highly regarded during his lifetime. Born into a musical family, he produced a respectable number of works, including ten symphonies, ten operas, eighteen violin concerti, four clarinet concerti, four oratorios, and various chamber works and art songs. Spohr was also known as the inventor of the violin chinrest and the orchestral rehearsal mark, as well as one of the first conductors to use a baton.

His musical style was strongly influenced by Beethoven, whom he knew personally. His progressive works include program music and numerous works with unconventional characteristics. Such is the case of his Seventh Symphony, subtitled “The Earthly and Divine in Human Life,” for double orchestra, one of four programmatic symphonies he composed. The two separate orchestras, a large one and a small one, represent the principles of the earthly and the divine, respectively. The three-movement format is also unique, and the pacing of the movements is shaped by a written program—each movement has a four-line verse:

I. Kinderwelt (The World of Childhood): The child in innocence dreams on, nor feels how near him still temptation steals; drawn unsuspecting to its sweet control, there is not yet gloom in his pure soul.

II. Zeit der Leidenschaften (The Age of Passion): But in the heart’s most holy springs of feeling soon all the passions mingle their wild strife; then swerves man from his high goal and, reeling, pursues the world, forgets the “Eternal Life.”

III. Endlicher Sieg des Göttlichen (Final Triumph of the Heavenly): But will this slavery of earth forever hold the free spirit in ignoble chains? O no! His Genius watches, warns, and will deliver; he wins! and heavenly rest rewards his pains!

Spohr apparently experienced personal and artistic setbacks during the 1830s, and this symphony is both an expression of and response to those setbacks—feelings of nostalgia for a lost, happy past and distaste for the present, both in the way music was developing and the repression of political institutions. This symphony inspired Robert Schumann to say of Spohr: “Let us follow him in art, in life, in all his striving. The industry, which is apparent in every line of the score, is truly moving. May he stand with our greatest Germans as a shining example.”
**Alexandra Picard**

Dramatic coloratura soprano Alexandra Picard is emerging as one of the most exciting sopranos in the Northwest, noted for her portrayals of the Queen of the Night in *Die Zauberflöte*. In her early training years, Alexandra performed roles such as Musetta in *La Bohème* in Graz, Austria, and in San Francisco, as well as the role of Arminda in *La Finta Giardiniera* in Oakland, California. Upon returning to Washington, Alexandra performed the demanding roles of Olympia in *Les Contes d'Hoffmann* for Bellevue Opera and Gerhilde in *Die Walküre* for Hawaii Opera Theater. Ms. Picard has an upcoming appearance with the University of Washington Orchestra as Lucia in *Lucia Di Lammermoor*.

Alexandra has performed to great acclaim as soprano soloist in *Carmina Burana*, as the Queen of the Night in *Die Zauberflöte* for the Seattle Opera Guild, and in orchestral masterworks by Beethoven, Brahms, Fauré and Handel, as well as a gala concert for the U.S. Embassy in Paris, France. Alexandra has been the soprano soloist for numerous performances of Gounod's *St. Cecilia Mass*, Strauss's *Four Last Songs*, and Haydn's *The Creation*. She originated the role of the Ghost of Butterfly in the jazz opera *Welcome to the Voice* for the Bell Atlantic Jazz Festival with Elvis Costello on Broadway.

Alexandra earned her BA from Harvard and her MM from the San Francisco Conservatory of Music. She was a returning member of the American Institute of Musical Studies Vocal Program based in Graz, Austria. 2014 finds her in a second year as a Doctoral Candidate in Vocal Performance at the University of Washington.

**David Krohn**

Praised by *Opera News* as “a clear stand-out, possessing a forceful and well-developed voice,” baritone David Krohn regularly performs as recitalist and opera singer throughout Europe, Canada, and the United States. His diverse repertoire spans the Baroque cantatas of Handel to musical theatre and Billy Joel, but the music closest to his heart comes from the Yiddish and Jewish tradition. Following in his father’s footsteps, David trained in the Eastern European tradition of Cantorial music, and beginning in 2005 he began a series of successful Yiddish and Hebrew concerts, continuing his father’s legacy by exposing traditional Jewish music to the audiences across the United States.

David holds a master’s degree from The Juilliard School and a bachelor’s degree from The Peabody Conservatory. He has performed over forty contrasting operatic roles with leading opera companies across the United States, including the title roles in *Barber of Seville* and *Don Giovanni* and the New York City premiere of *The Death of Klinghoffer* with composer John Adams conducting. In 2009, he made his New York Philharmonic debut singing Bernstein’s *West Side Story* and *Suite* in Carnegie Hall with Alan Gilbert conducting.

In 2010, David performed the complete cycles of Franz Schubert at The Juilliard School, with performances of individual cycles in Poitiers, France, and New York City. He has sung alongside Tyne Daly and Walter Bobbie as part of the New York Festival of Song, and his commitment to new music has led to premiere performances and recordings of works by Tom Cipullo, Christopher Berg and others.

**Scott R. Peterson**

Scott R. Peterson is in his 38th season as chorusmaster of the Yakima Symphony Chorus, resident chorus of the Yakima Symphony Orchestra and one of the finest community choral ensembles in Washington State. In addition to his leadership of the YSC, over the past three and a half decades Dr. Peterson has been active as a performer outside the Yakima area and was a member of the well-known Male Ensemble Northwest, which is made up of professional choral conductors and has produced four CDs. In 1993, he made his Carnegie Hall debut conducting Mozart’s *Requiem*. He conducted the Fairbanks Summer Arts Festival Chamber Chorale and Festival Chorus at the University of Alaska, Fairbanks, from 2001 through 2007. He is active as an adjudicator, clinician and guest conductor throughout the region. In 2009, he conducted the Washington Music Education Association Junior High All-State Choirs in Burien and Spokane.

Dr. Peterson is a recently retired member of the music faculty at Yakima Valley Community College where he conducted the YVCC Concert Choir and Chamber Singers. He received the Robert Leadon Teaching Award, the most prestigious faculty award at YVCC, and the President’s Award and Choral Leadership Award from the Washington State Chapter of the American Choral Director’s Association. He is also a recipient of both the Distinguished Alumni Award and the Teaching and Mentor Award from his alma mater, Midland University in Fremont, Nebraska. He now is an adjunct professor in the Choral Studies program at Central Washington University and is conductor of the CWU Men’s Chorus.

A native of Iowa, Scott Peterson received his DMA degree in Choral Conducting from the University of Washington, where he conducted the UW Opera Chorus. He was granted Central Washington University’s first MA degree in conducting where he formed and conducted the Central Chorale, and a BA degree in music education from Midland University, where he conducted the Freshmen Chorale. He also twice performed as a member of the Robert Shaw Festival Singers in Carnegie Hall under Robert Shaw. Scott and his wife, Jane, live in Yakima where she retired from the Yakima School District as a music specialist and is co-conductor of the Yakima Children’s Choir.
Mid-Columbia Mastersingers was founded as “Consort Columbia” in 1986 by Estyn Goss, as an elite choir of auditioned singers. Since its beginning, the group has been a versatile one, having embodied at times a musical theatre group, symphonic chorus, operatic chorus and also serving as the umbrella organization for a children's choir. Mr. Goss led the group for 10 years, and subsequent artistic directors included Reginald Unterseher (1996-2004) and Robert Bode (2005-2008), with Justin Raffa taking the position in 2008. Since his arrival, the choir has continued to grow in musical excellence, has become more widely-known throughout the community, and has dramatically increased its budget. Organizational focus has included musical excellence and diversity, outreach to the large Tri-Cities Hispanic population, and collaboration with other arts organizations.

2014-15 Mid-Columbia Mastersingers Artistic Staff

Justin Raffa, Artistic Director
Tara Pegasus, Accompanist
Jill Madison, Conducting Intern
Reginald Unterseher, Associate Conductor
**Justin Raffa**

Artistic director of the Mid-Columbia Mastersingers, Justin Raffa relocated to the Tri-Cities in August 2008 from Tucson, where he received a Master of Music degree in choral conducting from the University of Arizona. Since his arrival, Justin has endeavored to build increased collaboration within the local performing arts community. In addition to his role with the Mastersingers, Justin served for five years as orchestra manager of the Mid-Columbia Symphony and chorusmaster of the Oregon East Symphony in Pendleton. Justin has also served as an actor, music director and board member with Mid-Columbia Musical Theatre, music director with Columbia Basin College Summer Showcase productions, and music director at All Saints Episcopal Church in Richland. Additionally, Justin has served as an adjudicator for local festivals and competitions for local music and theatre education associations. Justin currently serves the local board of the American Choral Directors Association as Repertoire & Standards Chair for Community Choirs in Washington State. Justin is a passionate advocate for the arts in the community, and the City of Richland Arts Commission honored him with its 2011 award for Outstanding Individual Contribution to the Arts.

Originally from South Jersey, Justin is a graduate of Westminster Choir College of Rider University in Princeton, where he received a BM in music education with a vocal concentration, having studied conducting and group vocal technique with James Jordan. Justin has sung as part of the Berkshire Choral Festival, Spoleto Festival USA, Voces Novae et Antiquae, the Tucson Symphony Orchestra Chorus, the Berwick Chorus of the Oregon Bach Festival, and he continues to perform as a founding member of the Tucson Chamber Artists. Currently, Justin sings with Male Ensemble Northwest and Chor Anno, two regional ensembles made up of professional choral musicians in the Pacific Northwest. This season, he served Male Ensemble Northwest in an additional capacity as its board president. Justin lives with his partner Molly Holleran, singer and voice teacher extraordinaire, and their long-haired dachshund Coda.

**Program Notes**

Our second concert, *Sublime Solace*, begins with Benjamin Britten’s exciting instrumental masterwork *Sinfonia da Requiem*, and then the Yakima Symphony Chorus joins the YSO in the exquisite and comforting German Requiem by Brahms.

**Benjamin Britten**

*(November 22, 1913 – December 4, 1976)*

*Sinfonia da Requiem, op. 20*  
(1940)

Benjamin Britten showed early promise as a composer, with initial success in his early 20s, and achieving international stature by age 32 with his opera *Peter Grimes*. At the time of his death, he was considered to be one of the most important British composers of the twentieth century, with numerous large- and small-scale works in all genres. His music is considered to be more on the conservative, tonal side of modern music, which accounts for some of the popularity of his works—they are more immediately accessible to the general audience.

An avowed pacifist, Britten wrote many works with anti-war themes, of which *Sinfonia da Requiem* is an interesting early example. The piece was one of several commissioned from different composers (including Richard Strauss and Jacques Ibert) by the Japanese government to mark the 2,600th anniversary of the founding of the Japanese Empire. At the time, Japan had invaded China but had not formally entered World War II. Britten chose titles for the piece and its sections from the Roman Catholic Mass, and the Japanese government found these Christian references and the work’s “melancholy” nature contrary to the purpose of the commission, even insulting, and rejected the piece. Britten submitted a formal response explaining his reasoning, and the matter was apparently dropped—the official announcement from the Japanese was that the piece arrived too late to be included in any festivities; no request for return of the commission fee was made. The world premiere took place in Carnegie Hall on March 29, 1941, with the New York Philharmonic conducted by John Barbirolli. The first British performance took place the following year, and a belated Japanese premiere took place in 1956, with the composer conducting the NHK Symphony Orchestra. Not long after the New York premiere, Serge Koussevitzky conducted the work with the Boston Symphony Orchestra. This performance led to the Koussevitzky Music Foundation’s commission of *Peter Grimes*.

Any piece with “Requiem” in the title usually suggests a vocal composition, but this piece is purely instrumental. Its overt expression and clear connection to its inspiration have made it one of Britten’s most popular compositions, certainly among his instrumental works. The three movements are titled Lacrymosa, Dies Irae, and Requiem aeternam, and they are normally played without breaks. The Lacrymosa offers profound fear and sadness, the Dies Irae is a frightening depiction of the Last Judgment, and Requiem aeternam is an uneasy eternal rest.

According to scholar Herbert Glass, the *Sinfonia da Requiem* was not just an anti-war statement—it is dedicated to the memory of Britten’s parents. About the work, however, Britten himself said, “I’m making it just as anti-war as possible…I don’t believe you can express social or political or economic theories in music, but by coupling new music with well-known musical phrases, I think it’s possible to get over certain ideas…all I’m sure of is my own anti-war conviction as I write it.”

**Johannes Brahms**

*(May 7, 1833 – April 3, 1897)*

*Ein deutsches Requiem*  
*(A German Requiem), op. 45*  
(1868)

As a composer, Brahms is an interesting case. To some, his music is conservative, steeped in history and music of the past. To others, it is innovative because of the ways past musical styles, known and understood by his audience, are brought into the present day; some elements are updated and others combined in new ways to form a progressive style that was influential on future composers. He was a force in every
musical genre except opera, casting a shadow almost as large as Beethoven by the end of the nineteenth century.

Brahms's *A German Requiem* is the piece that put the composer "on the map," and one that shows his style in both conservative and innovative lights. It is essentially an oratorio built on the models of Handel and Bach, and it is Brahms's longest composition. The text for *A German Requiem* is not that of the traditional Requiem Mass, however, but passages Brahms chose himself from the German Lutheran Bible. The title comes from an important choice based on purpose—he intended this work to be in the German vernacular such that people who heard it could relate to it directly. It is also noteworthy that Brahms chose texts that mention only God; there is no specific mention of Jesus—thus, its focus is humanist, not necessarily Christian. At one point, he even considered the title *Ein menschliches Requiem* (A Human Requiem).

This purpose also resulted in a very different tone—instead of focusing on the dead in the afterlife, preaching fear and judgment to the living, this piece offers comfort and reassurance to those who have suffered loss. Some have speculated that grief over the loss of his mother in 1865 may have been an initial inspiration, but others have suggested that the earlier death of Robert Schumann in 1856 actually sparked the genesis of the work. After several partial premieres and test performances of selected movements, the final, seven-movement version was premiered in Leipzig on February 18, 1869, with Carl Reinecke conducting the Gewandhaus Orchestra and Chorus.

The seven movements form an expressive arch, with the outermost movements, "Blessed are they that mourn" and "Blessed are the dead," immediately offering comfort and reassurance with calm text and music. Movements 2 and 6 are serious and dramatic as they address the inevitable end of life (2) and the transformation of the dead (6). Movements 3 and 5 each begin with soloists, with text sung by the baritone and choir (in 3) asking for reassurance, and, in 5, by the soprano and choir offering that reassurance. Consolation and reassurance are not always gentle, however—sometimes they are forceful, even powerful. Brahms's orchestration is just as sensitive to the text as the vocal parts. He had not yet completed a symphony, and one can hear him working out some ideas he would use in future orchestral works. He draws on a full range of musical styles ranging from Baroque counterpoint to text painting to mainstream nineteenth-century chromaticism and full orchestration.

Considering the popularity of opera in the nineteenth century, it has always seemed odd that Brahms didn't write an opera. Maybe opera just wasn't his style, and writing a Requiem was a better fit with who he was as a person. *A German Requiem* is equal in expression to any opera, and just like opera composers of the time, Brahms used every resource available to him to express the text fully. In Brahms's *Requiem*, humans are allowed to be imperfect, to suffer loss and move forward, to experience blessings and grace while alive, not obligated to live in fear of an unknown afterlife. Deeply moving, profound and powerful, the piece is one of the greatest monuments of choral music.

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**Program Notes**

**YSO 2014-15 Season Heavenly Thoughts**

**The Yakima Valley Classical Series**

**Sublime Solace**
Brahms' exquisite German Requiem and a Britten symphony
Saturday, November 8, 2014, 7:30pm
Lawrence Golan, Conductor
Alexandra Picard, soprano
David Krohn, baritone
Yakima Symphony Chorus;
Dr. Scott Peterson, chorusmaster
Mid-Columbia Mastersingers;
Justin Raffa, artistic director

**A Star Is Born – Gold Medal Concert**
Music of Tchaikovsky and Rachmaninoff
Saturday, February 7, 2015, 7:30pm
Lawrence Golan, Conductor
Vadym Kholodenko, piano
(2013 Van Cliburn Gold Medalist)

**Transfiguration**
The Butterfly Lovers concerto, plus music of Strauss, Liszt and Higdon
Saturday, March 28, 2015, 7:30pm
Lawrence Golan, Conductor
Linda Wang, violin

**RESURRECTION**
Mahler's Second Symphony
Saturday, May 16, 2015, 7:30pm
Lawrence Golan, Conductor
Lindsay Russell, soprano
Melissa Schiel, alto
Yakima Symphony Chorus;
Dr. Scott Peterson, chorusmaster
Members of the Central Washington University Symphony and Choirs; Dr. Nikolas Caoile,
Dr. Gary Wiedenaar and Dr. Scott Peterson, directors

**The KCTS 9 - Yakima Sinfonietta Series**

**Dia de los Muertos**
Annual celebration of the cycle of life with Yakima's sister city of Morelia, Mexico
Saturday, October 25, 2014, 7:30 pm
The Seasons Performance Hall
Lawrence Golan, Conductor
Gerardo Sánchez Lara, piano

**HEAVENLY DELICACIES**
Delectable desserts paired with heavenly music and Yakima Valley wines
Saturday, January 10, 2015, 7:30pm
The 4th Street Theatre
Lawrence Golan, Conductor
Jill Whitman, harp

**The Memorial Family of Services Pops Series**

**Christmas Pops Spectacular**
With a taste of the Caribbean
Sunday, December 7, 2014, 4:00pm
Lawrence Golan, Conductor
Yakima Symphony Chorus;
Dr. Scott Peterson, chorusmaster
Bram Bratá Steel Drum Band;
B.J. Leggett, artistic director

**Fiddle-Faddle – Fiddler on the Roof**
Saturday, February 28, 2015, 7:30pm
and other Fiddlin' Favorites
Washington Lawrence Golan, Conductor
B.J. Leggett, artistic director

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Classical and Pops Concerts are held at the Capitol Theatre.