
Brahms: A German Requiem

March 8 & 9, 2024 • Schuster Center

ARTISTS

Neal Gittleman, *conductor*
Aurelian Oprea, *violin*
Murrella Parton, *soprano*
Darren Drone, *baritone*

Steven Hankle, *chorus director*
Dayton Philharmonic Chorus
Dayton Philharmonic Orchestra

PROGRAM

Amy Scurria

Beyond All Walking

Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart

Violin Concerto No. 3 in G major, K. 216

1. Allegro
2. Adagio
3. Rondeau: Allegro

Aurelian Oprea, violin

- INTERMISSION -

Johannes Brahms

A German Requiem, Op. 45

1. "Selig sind, die la Leid tragen"
("Blessed are they who bear suffering")
2. "Denn alles Fleisch es ist wie Gras"
("For all flesh, it is as grass")
3. "Herr, lehre doch mich" ("Lord, teach me")
4. "Wie lieblich sind deine Wohnungen"
("How lovely are they dwellings")
5. "Ihr habt nun Traurigkeit"
("You now have sadness")
6. "Denn wir haben hie keine bleibende Statt"
("For here we have no lasting place")
7. "Selig sind die Toten" ("Blessed are the dead")

Murrella Parton, soprano
Darren Drone, baritone
Dayton Philharmonic Chorus

Aurelian Oprea is the Erma R. & Hampden D. Catterton Endowed Guest Artist.
The Masterworks Series is sponsored by Dr. Ingrid Brown and Dr. Troy Tyner.

Microphones on stage are for recording purposes only.

About the Artists

Dayton Philharmonic Chorus

Steven Hankle,
director
Kevin Wilson,
assistant director
Andrea Arese-Elias,
accompanist
Carolyn Sweezy,
chorus manager

Soprano

Carla Ballou
Kayla Beasley
Beverly Bell
Eva Borbonus
Katy Bowman
Julia Brewster
Lillian Chambliss
Alyssa Charles
Karen Hamilton
Kaitlyn Hanes
Jeanne Kallenberg
Virginia Kuepper
Deb Nash
Tamra Payne
Whittney Perez
Lisa Polen
Graysen Schaney
Lora Scott
Marilyn Smyers
Melissa Tan
Susan Thomas
Carole Webb
Emma Weir

Alto

Rebecca Betts
Christy Brewster
Chelsea Brown
Julia Crowl
Elizabeth Douras
Fantasia Fairchild
Michele Foley
Elisia Getts
Sharon Gratto

Michele
Goodpaster
Farrah Isaacs
Linda Keith
Carol Manda
Katie Maxfield
Carolyn Sweezy
Susan Welsh
Sharon Williamson
Keatha Wilson

Tenor

Wes Alexander
Dorian Borbonus
Charles Garland
Frank C. Gentner
Dewayne Grooms
Michael Hambrick
Jonathan Hannah
Jon Hauberg
Gary Johnson
Brad Kallenberg
Gregory Marx
Nathan Nagir
Thomas Severyn
Kevin Wilson
Brian Wong

Bass

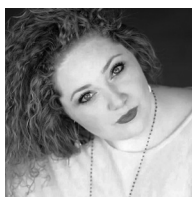
John Blakelock
Dan Bruno, Jr.
Doug Conrad
Mark Corcoran
Mike Flanagan
Mike Foley
Tom Gottweis
Tim McLinden
Aaron Meece
Curtis Notestine
Grant Parks
Howard Poston
Peter Veley
Paul Webb



**Aurelian
Oprea**
Violin

For the 2023-
2024 Season,
Aurelian Oprea

serves as Acting Concertmaster of the Dayton Philharmonic. He was born in Cluj-Napoca, the cultural capital of Romania's Transylvania region. His parents and grandfather were string players in the Romanian National Opera House Orchestra, and his grandmother was the prima ballerina of the Opera's ballet corps. Oprea earned a bachelor's degree in music performance from Bowling Green State University. He won his first professional audition at the age of 20, becoming the youngest member of the Michigan Opera Theater Orchestra in Detroit, a position he held until 2000 when he joined the DPO. Oprea is fluent in Romanian, Hungarian and English. He resides in Grafton Hill with his wife, Rachel, and his daughter, Hanna.



**Murrella
Parton**
Soprano

Recently, Murrella
Parton joined Santa
Fe Opera for her

comedic portrayal of Berta in *Il barbiere di Siviglia*. Parton has been described as "magnificent" and praised for her "commanding voice" by *Arts-Louisville* for her portrayal of Older Alyce in Tom Cipullo's *Glory Denied* with Kentucky Opera (2019). During the 2020 season, Parton was a virtual Gerdine Young Artist with Opera Theatre of Saint Louis. In the 2018-2019 season, she was the resident soprano in the Kentucky Opera Sandford Studio Artist program where

she made her professional debut as First Lady in Mozart's *Die Zauberflöte* and was seen as Hannah/Sheva in Ben Moore's *Enemies, A Love Story*.

Parton was a Finalist for The Laffont Competition (2021), previously known as the Metropolitan Opera National Council Auditions in which she was a Semi Finalist for the 2019 season.

Parton has performed in the Cincinnati Opera Chorus for productions of *Le Nozze di Figaro*, *Roméo et Juliette*, Wagner's *Der fliegende Holländer*, and the American premiere of Julien Bilodeau's *Another Brick in the Wall*. In 2018, she had the opportunity to workshop the role of Sabina in Rufus Wainwright's newest opera, *Hadrian*, with Opera Fusion: New Works. In addition to operatic repertoire, she has been a featured soloist in concerts of Finzi's *In Terra Pax*, Handel's *Messiah*, Vivaldi's *Gloria*, Vivaldi's *Magnificat*, Bach's *Magnificat*, Bach's *Mass* in B minor, Bach's *Ascension* Oratorio, and Mozart's *Requiem*.



Darren Drone Baritone

Described as having “a gorgeously warm tone and deep resonance” (*Opera*

News), baritone Darren Drone is quickly making a name for himself in the opera world. In the 2022–2023 season, Drone made a series of exciting debuts with esteemed American companies including Seattle Opera as Baron Douphol in *La Traviata*, Portland Opera as Zuniga in *Carmen*, and Opera San José in the title role of Verdi's *Falstaff*. He also participated in a workshop of Nmon Ford's *House of Orfeus*,

performed in a concert of operatic favorites with the Santa Fe Symphony and joined the Lyric Opera of Chicago roster where he will cover Preacher Man and Bilal in the world premiere of Daniel Roumain's and Anna Deavere Smith's *The Walkers*. In the summer of 2023, Drone debuted at The Glimmerglass Festival as Marcello in *La bohème* and Grégorio in *Roméo et Juliette*. Future seasons will also see him at Dallas Opera and Florentine Opera.

In the summer of 2021, Drone joined the Santa Fe Opera roster, covering the roles of the Count in *Le nozze di Figaro*, Starveling in *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, and the Captain in *Eugene Onegin*. In the summer of 2022, Drone returned to Santa Fe, singing Moralès in *Carmen* and covering the title role of *Falstaff*.

His 2020–2021 season began with his second year of residency with Michigan Opera Theatre. During his first year with the company, roles included covering Leporello in *Don Giovanni*, covering the title role in *Sweeney Todd*, performing both the title roles in *Gianni Schicchi*, as well as *Buoso's Ghost*, covering Tonio in *Pagliacci*, and preparing the role of Young Man/Man in Bar in *Champion* (canceled due to COVID-19). In the spring of 2020, Drone was awarded as a semifinalist in the Lotte Lenya Competition, performed with the Detroit Youth Symphony Orchestra, and was scheduled to make his company debut with Opera Maine as William in *The Fall of the House of Usher* (canceled due to COVID-19). In 2021, Drone made his company debut with Opera Naples as Riff in *West Side Story* and singing Baron Douphol while covering Germont in *La Traviata*. He was also set to make his role debut as the title role in *Le nozze di Figaro* with Opera in the Heights (COVID 19).

Program Notes

Beyond All Walking

Amy Scurria (b. 1973)

Beyond All Walking is dedicated to my Grandmother, Jean-Adelaide How, who passed away in 1995. While I was working on the piece, I rediscovered a poem by Rainer Maria Rilke that had a profound connection to the creation of this orchestra piece. The title of the piece, *Beyond All Walking*, was derived from the end of the poem: "She followed slowly, taking a long time, as though there were some obstacle in the way: and yet: as though, once it was overcome, she would be beyond all walking, and would fly." It was quite

fascinating to me that although I had already composed the end of the piece, I felt such a powerful connection between the end of this poem and the feeling that I had tried to convey with the ending chorale. The soul is a powerful thing and its natural inclination is to want to fly up towards the heavens. I tried to create a feeling of flight at the end of this piece, as if throughout the piece, one has been longing for some sort of release, and once arrived at, one can feel the power of flight. I believe that there are many ways that one can fly without leaving the ground. To me, God's gift of music is the most powerful of those ways. Neither the intellect nor intuition can be rejected for truly honest and powerful music. Music which accomplishes this balance reflects nature in a most profound way. Through this piece, I humbly attempted to reach this balance. I tried to create a work that would employ a language which successfully lies between the strongholds of atonal and tonal sounds. I often found myself struggling with the inclination to treat the two languages as if they were opposing forces, rather than two things that could exist together. Whether I achieved a harmony between the two or not, both literally and figuratively, can be left to the listener to decide. Out of a cluster from the strings emerges a tonal chorale which gives the feeling of flight. However, like death, like life, like faith, no matter how strong, there is always a moment of uncertainty and questioning. The piece ends with solo flute which against the tonal chorale is that hanging question, the uncertainty of life itself. — *Amy Scurria*

COMPOSED

1997–1998

PREMIERE

May 2, 1998;
Haddonfield, NJ

LAST DPO PERFORMANCE

DPO Premiere

DURATION

10 minutes

Violin Concerto No. 3 in G major, K. 216

Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart (1756–1791)

Besides his indisputable legacy as one of Western music's great composers, Mozart was also a virtuoso violinist in his youth. Not yet 20 years old, Mozart wrote his only five violin concertos while he still lived in Salzburg and performed as Konzertmeister (Music director) for the Archbishop Colloredo's court orchestra. The *Third* of these concertos was completed in September of 1775 and it's likely that Mozart himself

COMPOSED

1775

PREMIERE

September 12, 1775;
Salzburg, Austria

LAST DPO PERFORMANCE

March 2017

DURATION

25 minutes

premiered it as both the soloist and conductor. Among his five violin concertos, this is arguably his most intimate and adventurous, and likewise, one of his most popular.

The first movement is summery and bright. The main theme skips with a gentle cheerfulness. Though the violin soloist often has the limelight, Mozart also ingeniously treats its phrases in a chamber-music-like fashion. Especially delightful is this treatment at about two minutes, when the soloist splits its theme with the upper strings, then becomes the accompaniment for the oboes. The ending bars are whimsically brief.

The celebrated second movement is a poignantly beautiful aria. Mozart changes out the oboes from the first movement for two flutes, softening the orchestra's timbre, as well as directing the upper strings to place mutes on their strings to darken their luster. The effect makes the solo violin sound as though it's singing apart, in its own radiant reverie.

The final movement, Rondeau, begins with a light-hearted theme in a triple meter—a theme that will return several times throughout the movement. The movement's opening *joie de vivre* soon meets with two boldly unconventional sections in duple meter. This happens at about three minutes, starting with a slower section introducing a darkly gorgeous folksong-like melody played by the soloist over *pizzicato* (plucked) orchestral strings. This is immediately followed by a slightly faster section with a new folkdance tune (likely originating from Strasbourg, France) and which prompted Mozart to refer to the entire work as his "Strassburg Concerto." The first theme returns cheerfully, and the Concerto gambols to a delightfully nonchalant ending.

A German Requiem

Johannes Brahms (1833–1897)

Brahms's A German Requiem was fully completed in 1868, but he had begun work on it as far back as 1854, probably inspired by the suicide attempt that year, and death shortly after, of his musical hero and friend, Robert Schumann. The 1868 premiere of six movements of his Requiem became Brahms's first great triumph in his career and solidified his stature as one of Europe's greatest composers. Later in 1868, Brahms added a seventh movement—its premiere taking place in 1869.

The Requiem differs from the typical Catholic Mass for the Dead. First, the "German" in its title refers to it being in German, not Latin. And second, rather than creating a musical prayer to help the departed into heaven as Requiems typically do, Brahms focuses on consoling those left behind.

Brahms set the text of the first movement in a darkly somber tone. Though solemn, the music expresses a sweetness veiled by mourning. Brahms's orchestration here is unusual, omitting the violins, clarinets, and piccolo, and—very rare for Brahms—the use of the harp here and in later movements. As the violas, cellos, and basses solemnly play a sighing opening melody, they begin with a three-note, ascending motive that will be used throughout to unify the entire work.

COMPOSED

1865–1868

PREMIERE

February 18, 1869;
Leipzig, Germany

LAST DPO

PERFORMANCE

May 2013

DURATION

72 minutes

The longest movement of the work, “For all flesh is as grass ...” begins as a slow funerary march, with the low registers and funeral drums (timpani) introducing the first theme. The chorus enters in a dim but moving chant, expressing some of the most sobering and poetic verses in the Bible. From this musical darkness the mood shifts to radiance, ending with miraculous serenity.

The baritone soloist enters into a recitative dialogue with the chorus. Crying out a sobering message, he sings “Lord, teach me that there must be an end to me” directly to us, the chorus then echoing from afar. The music builds in urgency into a remarkable double fugue, one for the chorus and another for the orchestra—held together with a low D-pedal point in the timpani, tuba and trombones, a note that remains fixed underneath harmonic changes—all ending in spine-tingling power.

The upper winds open with a simple and consoling descending melody. The melody is then inverted, which magically makes it sound more hopeful, three bars later when the chorus enters singing “How lovely is thy dwelling place, Lord.”

Brahms added the meltingly lovely fifth movement after hearing a triumphant performance of the work in six movements in 1868. Likely in memory of his deceased mother, who Brahms was very close to, the movement is a setting of maternal comfort and profound compassion.

The text and music of the sixth movement speak of the mysteries (and salvation) that permeate the New Testament. Indeed, the opening of the movement is almost without a tonal center, shifting through beguilingly misty tonal landscapes. Then, Brahms presents several themes in sequence, all of which eventually begin to topple over one another into one of the great climactic endings of the entire work.

The final movement recalls the music of the first, but now bathed in new light. The basses and cellos sing a similar motif to that of the opening in the first movement, but here the music is more fluid, and the violins have been reinstated. Here also, the work of consolation for the bereaved is finished, and Brahms chooses text showing comfort for those who have died and look to an eternal rest: “Blessed are the dead which die in the Lord.” The closing section evokes a sense of comfort and quiet glory. At the Requiem’s final, breathtaking bars, the harp plucks teardrops into the hush of eternity.

Texts & Translations

ORIGINAL GERMAN TEXT

1. Chorus

Selig sind, die da Leid tragen,
denn sie sollen getröstet werden.
(Matthew 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.
(Psalms 126:5–6)

ENGLISH TRANSLATION

Blessed are those who mourn
for they shall be comforted.
(Matthew 5:4)

They that sow in tears shall reap
in joy. He that goeth forth and
weepeth, bearing precious seed, shall
doubtless come again with rejoicing,
bringing his sheaves with him.
(Psalms 126:5–6)

2. Chorus

Denn alles Fleisch ist wie Gras und alle Herrlichkeit des Menschen wie des Grases Blumen. Das Gras ist verdorret und die Blume abgefallen. (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 is geduldig darüber, bis er empfahe den Morgenregen und Abendregen. (James 5:7)

Aber des Herrn Wort bleibet in Ewigkeit. (1 Peter 1:25)

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. (Isaiah 35:10)

3. Baritone Solo and Chorus

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 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, wess soll ich mich trösten? Ich hoffe auf dich. (Psalm 39:4-7)

Der Gerechten Seelen sind in Gottes Hand und keine Qual rühret sie an. (Wisdom of Solomon 3:1)

4. Chorus

Wie lieblich sind deine Wohnungen, Herr Zebaoth! Meine seele verlanget und sehnet sich nach den Vorhöfen des Herrn; mein Leib und Seele freuen sich in dem lebendigen Gott.

For all flesh is as grass, and all the glory of man as the flower of grass. The grass withereth, and the flower therof falleth away. (1 Peter 1:24)

Be patient therefore, brethren, unto the coming of the Lord. Behold, the husbandman waiteth for the precious fruit of the earth, and hath long patience for it, until he receive the early and latter rain. (James 5:7)

But the word of the Lord endureth for ever. (1 Peter 1:25)

And the ransomed of the Lord shall return, and come to Zion with songs and everlasting joy upon their heads; they shall obtain joy and gladness, and sorrow and sighing shall flee away. (Isaiah 35:10)

Lord, make me to know mine end, and the measure of my days, what it is: that I may know how frail I am. Behold, Thou hast made my days as a handbreadth; and mine age is as nothing before Thee; Surely, every man at his best state is altogether vanity. Surely every man walketh in a vain shew; surely they are disquieted in vain; he heapeth up riches and knoweth not who shall gather them. And now Lord, what wait I for? My hope is in Thee. (Psalm 39:4-7)

The souls of the righteous are in the hands of God, and there shall no torment touch them. (Wisdom of Solomon 3:1)

How amiable are they tabernacles, O Lord of Hosts! My soul longeth, even fainteth for the courts of the Lord; my heart and my flesh crieth out for the living God.

Wohl denen, die in deinem Hause
wohnen, die loben dich immerdar.
(Psalm 84:1-2, 4)

5. Soprano Solo and Chorus

Ihr habt nun Traurigkeit; aber ich will
euch wieder sehen und euer Herz
soll sich freuen und eure Freude soll
neimand von euch nehmen.
(John 16:22)

Sehet mich an: Ich habe eine
kleine Zeit Mühe und Arbeit gehabt
und habe großen Trost funden.
(Ecclesiastes 51:27)

Ich will euch trösten,
wie Einen seine Mutter tröstet.
(Isaiah 66:13)

6. Baritone Solo and Chorus

Denn wir haben hie keine bleibende
Statt, sondern die zukünftige suchen wir.
(Hebrews 13:14)

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
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?
(1 Corinthians 15:51-52, 54-55)

Herr, du bist Würdig zu nehmen Preis
und Ehre und Kraft, denn du hast alle
Dinge geschaffen, und durch deinen
Willen haben, sie das Wesen und
sind geschaffen.
(Revelations 4:11)

7. Chorus

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.
(Revelations 14:13)

Blessed are they that dwell in Thy
house, they will be still praising Thee.
(Psalm 84:1-2, 4)

And ye now therefore have sorrow;
but I will see you again, and your
heart shall rejoice, and your joy
no man taketh from you.
(John 16:22)

Ye see how for a little while
I labor and toil, yet have
I found much rest.
(Ecclesiastes 51:27)

As one whom his mother
comforteth, so will I comfort you.
(Isaiah 66:13)

For here have we no continuing city,
but we seek one to come.
(Hebrews 13:14)

Behold I shew 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
trump: for the trumpet shall sound,
and the dead shall be raised
incorruptible, and we shall
be changed.

Then shall be brought to pass saying
that is written: Death is swallowed
up in victory. O death, where is thy
sting? O grave, where is thy victory?
(1 Corinthians 15:51-52, 54-55)

Thou art worthy, O Lord,
to receive glory and honor
and power: for Thou hast created
all things, and for Thy pleasure
they are and were created.
(Revelations 4:11)

Blessed are the dead who die in the
Lord from henceforth: Yea, saith the
Spirit, that they may rest from their
labors; and their works do follow them.
(Revelations 14:13)