Brahms: *A German Requiem*

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Introduction

I will admit that I could happily omit the 'German' and simply say 'Human'[1]

Concept

Brahms's frank admission to Carl Martin Reinthaler, the organist of Bremen Cathedral, before rehearsals for the first performance of his *German Requiem* (prepared by Reinthaler, conducted by Brahms) captures the essence of the work, as well as pointing to its originality.[2] For not only did Brahms substitute the German language for the more familiar Latin of the Requiem Mass, but he also substituted for the traditional sources an entirely independent compilation of texts with no liturgical purpose. By 'human' Brahms indicates to Reinthaler[3] that the primary emphasis of his text is on the comforting of the living and not the spiritual destiny of the departed. Nonetheless, the fact that his text had such strongly Christian associations naturally prompted enquiry as to its theological meaning, and the nature of his own beliefs. Thus the orthodox Reinthaler sought to persuade Brahms to give his work a more specifically Christian content when contemplating with him the preparation of performance, writing on 5 October 1867:

> You stand not only on religious but on purely Christian ground. Already the second number indicates the prediction of the return of the Lord, and in the last number but one there is express reference to the mystery of the resurrection of the dead, 'we shall not all sleep'. For the Christian mind, however, there is lacking the point on which everything turns, namely the redeeming death of Jesus. Perhaps the passage 'death, where is thy sting' would be the best place to introduce this idea, either briefly in the music itself before the fugue, or in a new movement. Moreover, you say in the last movement, 'blessed are the dead which die in the Lord from henceforth', that is, after Christ has finished the work of redemption.[4]

Reinthaler's suggestion fell on deaf ears. Brahms replied that he had knowingly passed over such passages as St John, Chapter 3, verse 16 ('for God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten son'), while he had selected

others 'because I am a musician, because I needed them, and because I cannot dispute or delete a "from henceforth" from my revered poets'.[5] Brahms was surely not being evasive in this answer. He would doubtless have found it difficult to defend his choices in theological terms. The choice of familiar words was more an expression of cultural identity than a theological statement. He read the Bible as a repository of experience and wisdom in memorable literary form, rather than as defining the Christian creed. Indeed, there is no reference to Christ anywhere in the text of the Requiem, though Christ's words are quoted from St Matthew's gospel at the very outset and from St John's gospel in the fifth movement. But the textual content must have continued to cause some concern to the Bremen cathedral authorities and it is notable that the programme of the first performance included amongst its additional items movements from some of Handel's *Messiah*, including the aria 'I know that my Redeemer liveth'.[6]

Brahms retained this independence of outlook throughout his life. Though baptized and confirmed in the Lutheran faith,[7] 'nothing made [him] more angry than to be taken for a conventional believer on the basis of his religious compositions'[8] and he liked in later years to point out the 'heathen' character of some of his preferred texts.[9] The conviction of outlook which emerges from his choice of texts was based on an intimate knowledge of the Christian scriptures, inclining as much to the Old Testament as to the New and also drawing on the Apocrypha.[10] It was this knowledge which imparts to the text of the *Requiem* its great power and focus, since Brahms draws together many related and complementary fragments from diverse sources.[11] Deeply held thoughts and sentiments which emerge repeatedly in his work are prominent: the bleak reality of the transience of life, the need of comfort, the hope of some ultimate happy resolution, the reward for effort. The *Requiem* offers the most comprehensive selection of such texts in a single Brahms work. In so doing it also stands at an important point in his spiritual development, at least as defined through the texts he set. Those before the *Requiem* tend to be more orthodox than the later ones, complete texts from the Old or New Testaments or hymn-texts of the Lutheran tradition. But from the 1870s, beginning with the major works for chorus and orchestra to secular texts, and continuing with the motets Op. 74 and Op. 110 to religious texts, a more recurrent pessimism creeps in. Two works serve to place the sentiments of the *Requiem* in a broader perspective: the *Begräbnisgesang* (*Burial Song*) Op. 13, for chorus and wind band, written in 1859, about ten years before completion of the *Requiem*, and the *Vier ernste Gesänge* (*Four Serious Songs*) for baritone and piano, written thirty years later in 1896 at the end of his life. The *Burial Song* is a single-movement setting

of the graveside hymn of the Lutheran Burial Service 'Nun laßt uns den Leib begraben . . .' ('Now let us bury the body . . .') beginning (like the second movement of the *Requiem*) with the contemplation of the common fate of man and beast. It speaks of the confidence of the faithful in the resurrection of the departed one and ends with the hope of eternal rest in the comfort of the Saviour. By the time Brahms had selected the texts of the *Four Serious Songs* the context of the imagery had changed. After three texts which intensify the picture of man's fate and which eventually welcome death for those with nothing to hope for, there is a resolution into St Paul's great hymn to Christian love in his first letter to the Church at Corinth: 'now abideth faith, hope and love, but the greatest of these is love'.[12] Thus, human love concerned Brahms at the end of his life more than a contemplation of the unknowable.

Brahms's choice of texts places his *Requiem* in a unique position within the tradition of nineteenth-century choral works with orchestra. His major German predecessors Beethoven, Schubert and Schumann all expressed their religious sentiments in music through the Latin texts of the Mass or Requiem Mass. Even Schumann, who was the most dedicated to the use of German, and who also noted the idea of a 'German Requiem' as a future project (though Brahms claimed to know nothing of it),[13] wrote all his German 'oratorios' to secular texts, including his *Requiem for Mignon*, taken from Goethe's *Wilhelm Meister*. The tradition from which Brahms made his text goes much further back: to the Protestant church music of the Baroque, most notably of J. S. Bach and Heinrich Schütz. Both anticipate Brahms's choices of texts, texts that were then very familiar to church musicians. Schütz set 'Die mit Thränen säen' twice (in the *Psalms of David*, 1619, and in the *Geistliche Chormusik* of 1648), 'Wie lieblich sind deine Wohnungen' once (in the *Psalms of David* of 1619 (for double choir a 4)) and 'Selig sind die Toten' in the *Geistliche Chormusik* of 1648. Several Bach cantatas draw on these and on other of the *Requiem* texts in the German originals or in paraphrase form. Furthermore, these texts also appear in non-liturgical compilations in works for specific devotional or funeral uses. Schütz's *Musicalische Exequien* is in three sections, of which the third combines the text of the German Nunc Dimittis, 'Herr, nun lässest du deinen Diener' with that of 'Selig sind die Toten'. Schütz's work is a German-language Requiem of 1636, a *Teutsche Begräbnissmissa*. Of Bach's works which compile individual texts, Cantata 106, 'Gottes Zeit ist die allerbeste Zeit' (known as 'Actus Tragicus'), has been seen as an obvious precursor,[14] a small 'German Requiem' in six movements, of which the third uses the text of Brahms's third movement in an alternative version from Psalm 90, verse 12, 'Herr, lehre uns bedenken, daß wir sterben müssen, daß wir klug

werden' (Lord, teach us to know that we must die, so that we may become wise'). The tradition continued into the nineteenth century: as well as Schumann's concept, Franz Schubert composed a *Deutsches Requiem* for his brother's professional use.[15] This continuity obviously adds another dimension to Brahms's use of the indefinite article in his title, *Ein deutsches Requiem*: one particular choice of texts within a tradition of vernacular settings.

Against this German background it becomes of interest that Brahms used the Latin term 'Requiem' at all, rather than a designation more characteristic of his Baroque predecessors, such as 'Geistliche Chormusik' or 'Trauerkantate'. It may have been prompted by the work's symphonic scope, by the desire to place it alongside the great requiem mass settings of the past; indeed, it has some structural parallels with the Latin mass which are not part of the Protestant inheritance (though its emphasis is certainly very different, and it notably offers up no prayers for the dead). Musical settings of the Requiem text differ widely in their allocation of text to individual musical movements, as well as in some textual content, though some, like the Brahms, fall into seven movements.[16] But, like Brahms's, most have a recall of the opening movement at the end (to 'Requiem aeternam dona eis Domine' in the first and last, with the related text 'dona eis requiem sempiternam' in the Agnus Dei) and have somewhere near the centre the contemplation of blessedness (the 'Sanctus' in the Mass, movement 4 in the Brahms), as well as reference to the 'tuba mirum' text (in the 'Dies Irae' of the Latin and movement 6 of the Brahms). In placing the work in the fuller perspective of familiar religious texts it is also of note that Brahms's final text 'Selig sind die Toten' is in the final section of the Lutheran funeral service, and other parallels exist with this service, as well as with its counterpart in the Anglican liturgy. The major feature which separates the Brahms text from that of the Latin Mass is the recurrence of its basic themes. The Mass's very lengthy sections with their diverse imagery have often stimulated dramatic musical settings. But Brahms's text is compact and focused, with several key ideas constantly in play.

History

What little is known of the *Requiem*'s origin is based on Brahms's correspondence and on reminiscences published after his death. The correspondence shows ongoing work during April 1865 and from February to August 1866, with revision from August to December 1866. The first reference to the work comes in a letter from Brahms to Clara Schumann of 'April 1865' in which he encloses a choral movement from 'a kind of German Requiem'. Brahms's

letter of Monday 24 April 1865 refers again to the work, also mentioning a second movement, as well as a first which was already conceived orchestrally, and quoting their texts:

> Just have a look at the beautiful words with which it begins. It is a chorus in F major without violins but accompanied by a harp and other beautiful things . . . I compiled the text from passages from the Bible. The chorus I sent you is number four. The second is in C minor and is in march time . . . I hope that a German text of this sort will please you as much as the usual Latin one. I am hoping greatly to produce a sort of whole out of the thing and wish for enough courage and energy to carry it through.[17]

Of the fourth movement he comments (with typical self-deprecation) 'it is probably the weakest part of the said German Requiem, but . . . it may have vanished into thin air before you come to Baden'.[18] In her reply of 1 May she responded 'the chorus from the Requiem pleases me very much, it must sound beautiful. I like it particularly up to the figured passage, but not so much where this goes on and on' (bb. 134–6 of the fourth movement).[19] Only in Brahms's reference to the march of the second movement as being 'in C minor' rather than the published B♭ minor do these comments conflict with the movements 1, 2 and 4 that we know (and this could be explained as a printer's error in the published edition of the correspondence with Clara).[20] That the music of the present third movement was also part of the scheme, though not mentioned by Brahms, seems implicit in the identity of movements 1, 2 and 4; presumably it was not mentioned because it was still sketchy or incomplete. Though Brahms vouchsafed knowledge of the work to Clara, he begged her at this stage 'not to show the enclosed fourth movement to Joachim',[21] which suggests that he had still not advanced enough with the work to wish to encourage expectations of it. Nothing more is heard of the *Requiem* until February of the following year, when the composition of the remaining movements of a six-movement work and completion of the existing ones emerges in regular sequence whilst Brahms was staying in Karlsruhe, Winterthur, Zurich and finally in Baden Baden. The main part of the third movement was completed between February and 18 April, the fugue between 18 April and the beginning of June. Movements 5 and 6 (which became movements 6 and 7 in the final version) were then completed between the beginning of June and 17 August, when Brahms wrote at the end of the score 'Baden Baden summer 1866'.[22] From then until 24 October he worked further on editing the full score at Baden, and allowed Clara to hear more of it, also inviting Albert Dietrich to do so.[23] Between 25 October and December he prepared a vocal score which he gave to Clara on 30 December.[24]

Although a press report prior to the first performance in Bremen in April

1868 indicates that it was then known that the second movement dated from much earlier,[25] it was only when the reminiscences of Albert Dietrich were published in 1899, two years after Brahms's death, that more specific information became available. Dietrich states that the movement was originally part of the Sonata/Symphony in D minor of 1854: 'the slow scherzo after became transformed into the funeral march in the *German Requiem*'.[26] The two-piano Sonata had been begun in February 1854 and had been planned in three or possibly four movements. Sometime towards the summer of that year Brahms began to orchestrate it as a symphony. This work was then abandoned and its first movement reworked to form the first movement of the Piano Concerto in D minor, to which two new movements were added to complete the work later published as Op. 15 in 1859.[27]

Dietrich's description of the 1854 movement as a 'slow scherzo' has always aroused curiosity, since it seems a contradiction in terms. However, it can be explained by the movement's symphonic origin, the term relating to form not to style. In a parallel example from only four years previously, the second movement of a symphony, Schumann's *Rhenish* (1850), also associates the title Scherzo with a movement much slower than normal, here a slow Ländler in 3/4. Brahms's key (B♭ minor relative to a tonality of D minor) would also have fitted a post-Beethoven symphonic scheme. Less clear in meaning is Dietrich's further characterization of the theme, communicated to Kalbeck and widely quoted since, as being 'in Sarabande tempo'; this is puzzling, since the typical rhythm usually results in a change of harmony on the second beat and not the third, as in the *Requiem* movement.[28] The press comment, presumably informed by Dietrich or even Brahms himself, merely relates that the movement was similar 'in outer form' to the later *Requiem* movement. Whether the march contained the distinctive theme given to the chorus to the words 'Denn alles Fleisch' cannot be decided from Dietrich's brief remarks. The familiar view of Brahms's first biographer Max Kalbeck that the choral part was added as a 'counterpoint' to the instrumental march has no support in fact;[29] on the other hand, Brahms stated that both this choral material and the opening bars of the first movement are based on a Lutheran chorale melody: a clue to the work's hidden background? The implications of this comment are pursued in Chapter 2 (pp. 26–34). No hard evidence of what took place in the intervening eleven years at present exists, though much Brahms literature still reflects the conjectural view of Kalbeck that the work had assumed the form of a 'Trauerkantate' comprising movements 1–4 of the present work in some form of completion by 1861.[30] Kalbeck's specificity of date is based on an interpretation of a single sheet which contains the entire (seven-movement) text of the

Requiem on the verso of a draft for the fourth of the *Magelonelieder* (at the end of the first volume), known to have been composed in 1861 in Hamburg; this he sees as having been written in two stages, Nos. 1–4 in 1861 and Nos. 5–7 later. The relevance of this sheet almost certainly belongs to a much later stage when Brahms was considering the position of the newly composed fifth movement (see p. 10 and note 42). That so original a work may have assumed some preliminary form, however, seems feasible, and the likely influences upon its growth cannot be ignored in considering its nature (these issues are also pursued in Chapter 2, pp. 31–4).

Since the *Requiem* was not written to commission or for any public event, no performance was envisaged immediately after its completion. Indeed, Brahms was still reluctant to advertise it at all, being more concerned with the reactions of his trusted circle to its unusual conception. Only Clara, Joachim and Dietrich seem to have been intimate to its emergence, though a slightly broader circle, possibly including Clara's friends in Baden and Brahms's former teacher Eduard Marxsen in Hamburg, came to know of it when it was first completed. It was to Dietrich that he vouchsafed the full score itself when contemplating the first performance, in a letter written shortly after 7 June 1867.[31] It was natural that he should have first have thought of a North German city such as Bremen and a Protestant cathedral for the first performance of such a work. And there were also professional reasons: he still had strong contacts in the north and retained aspirations towards the position of director of music in a major city, which such a performance would advance. Moreover, Reinthaler had a fine reputation as a choir trainer and Brahms could expect careful preparation of his work. He writes to Dietrich on 30 July 1867:

> I start tomorrow on a walking journey with my father through upper Austria, I do not know when I shall be back. Keep the enclosed Requiem until I write to you, Do not let it out of your hands and write to me very seriously by and by what you think of it. An *offer* from Bremen would be very acceptable to me. [But] it would have to be combined with a concert engagement. In short, Reinthaler must probably be sufficiently pleased with the thing to do something for it. For the rest I am inclined to let such matters quietly alone. I do not intend to worry myself about them.[32]

Brahms's concern about the manuscript was understandable. As Florence May observes in her biography of the composer, 'there is a trace of nervous anxiety in this letter which leaves little doubt that Brahms had within him the consciousness that in the *German Requiem* he had transcended all his previous achievements and that he was even unusually anxious to secure a favourable opportunity for hearing a new work. Up to now it had only been submitted to Frau Schumann's drawing room and a few enthusiastic friends of the Baden

circle.'[33] By the time Brahms returned to Vienna and requested the return of his manuscript from Dietrich, his friend had sent it to Bremen.[34] His hope for a Bremen performance – Brahms's correspondence with Reinthaler begins in early October from Vienna – was not to have been in vain.[35] But important as the possibility of Bremen clearly was to Brahms, he also had his contacts in Vienna, where he had lived frequently since 1862. Through his contact with the conductor of the Gesellschaft der Musikfreunde, Johann Herbeck, a performance of movements 1–3 was arranged for 1 December 1867, in a programme dedicated to the memory of Schubert which also included a performance of movements from the *Rosamunde* music. The orchestral and choral parts were prepared from the beginning of October, and the soloist in the third movement was Rudolf Panzer of the Imperial Chapel.[36]

The long-standing plans with Bremen had reached finalization by the beginning of 1868, and Brahms informed his publisher Rieter-Biedermann that the first performance would take place in the Cathedral on Good Friday, 10 April, with Julius Stockhausen as baritone soloist, he himself conducting.[37] Brahms was still apparently willing to receive advice on the work from close confidants; for example, he wrote to Marxsen to request some comments that might help to improve the work, including something on the pedal fugue of the third movement.[38] Brahms took great interest in the rehearsals, which began in early February. He offered to come and play the difficult piano reduction in the vocal score. His own involvement helped to stimulate interest and the two leading papers carried advance notice of the first performance and accounts of the work and of its composer's importance, for about ten days before. The advertisement for the day before the first performance, Thursday 9 April, listed the additional items in the programme of the 'Geistliches Konzert' (Sacred Concert) to be conducted personally by the composer, the proceeds of which were to go to the benefit of the widows' and orphans' fund of the city. The additional items were to be performed during a break between movements 4 and 5 (that is, 4 and 6 of the present numbering) and after the work. In this break Joachim played three items: the slow movement of Bach's Violin Concerto in A minor with orchestra, an Andante by Tartini and his own arrangement of Schumann's song 'Abendlied', both with organ accompaniment. After the end of the *Requiem*, Joachim was joined by his wife, the alto Amalie Weiss, in the aria with obbligato violin 'Erbarme dich' from Bach's *St Matthew Passion*. In addition Weiss sang the aria 'I know that my redeemer liveth' from *Messiah* and the choruses 'Behold the Lamb of God' and 'Hallelujah' were performed. The performance was a great success and the cathedral was full, with upwards of 2,500 people in attendance, including many of Brahms's

friends and other distinguished musicians from all over Germany and abroad. The deep significance of the event for Brahms and his circle emerges clearly from Clara's diary. She travelled to Bremen on 9 April, partially in the company of the Joachims, and arrived in Bremen whilst Brahms was taking the rehearsal. 'Johannes was already standing at the conductor's desk. The Requiem quite overpowered me . . . Johannes showed himself an excellent conductor. The work had been wonderfully prepared by Reinthaler. In the evening we all met together – a regular congress of artists.' Of the performance itself she says 'the Requiem has taken hold of me as no sacred music ever did before . . . As I saw Johannes standing there, baton in hand, I could not help thinking of my dear Robert's prophecy, "Let him but once grasp his magic wand and work with orchestra and chorus", which is fulfilled today. The baton was really a magic wand and its spell was upon all present. It was a joy such as I have not felt for a long time.'[39] The second performance was given on Tuesday 28 April at the Bremen Union, Reinthaler now conducting, and with the baritone solo sung by Franz Krolop; the programme included Beethoven's Seventh Symphony and a Weber aria.

The fifth movement

During the month following the Bremen premiere, Brahms completed another movement for soprano solo with chorus and orchestra, which became No. 5 in the final published sequence (the former Nos. 5 and 6 becoming 6 and 7 respectively). He wrote the manuscript in Hamburg, where he had gone to stay with his father and to add the final touches to the Bremen score for publication. It was seemingly completed by 24 May 1868, when Brahms sent the corrected full score to Rieter-Biedermann, writing 'Now a seventh number has to be added, No. 5, soprano solo, with about 16 bars of chorus. I shall send this number later as I have to have it written out first and have to look for a place where I can have it played over to me, for money and kind words. Therefore I note that it occupies seventeen pages in my full score and six pages in the vocal score; you can therefore plan accordingly.'[40]

The reason for the late addition of the movement to an already performed work has always prompted speculation, not least because of the text, with its reference to the comfort of a mother, which has been widely connected with the death of Brahms's own mother, little over three years before on 2 February 1865: indeed, according to Florence May, Brahms told Hermann Deiters that 'when writing [the movement] he had thought of his mother'.[41] However, the evidence that the text and music of the movement were selected and conceived

after (rather than the music composed after) is by no means certain. The documentary evidence provided by the text-sheet (see pp. 6–7 and Plate 1) permits several interpretations. The most literal is that the text was conceived as part of the whole before the first performance, since the sheet contains the entire text with tempo markings for movements 1 and 2 which predate not only the published score but the many revisions in the autograph full score and part-autograph vocal score which were used for the rehearsals and first performance:[42] it might thus be connected with the period when Brahms is known to have borrowed a large biblical concordance, seemingly to check his text and its sources, during final work on the *Requiem* at Zurich in summer 1866.[43] However, the distinction between the texts of movements 1–2 and 3–7 can also be interpreted to suggest that 3–7 were added later to provide the complete text (perhaps for easy reference), either before the first performance or after. Whether Brahms's equivocation over the order of movements 4 and 5 (first reversed, then restored) was part of this process is also an open question. But if both added text and changed numbering were written down after the first performance (thus before Brahms notified his publisher of the new movement numbered '5' on 24 May 1868), one wonders why he needed to complete the entire text of a work, the score of which (with the draft/final copy of movement 5) already contained it. Doubt also attaches to the assumed chronology of the composition of the added movement. The period from roughly mid April to 24 May at the latest seems very short for the conception and execution of such an individual movement which complements the sentiment and musical structure of the whole so profoundly.[44] Knowledge of Brahms's protracted working processes and the fact of the very personal nature of the conception suggest prior planning of text and music, if not yet of final execution, a fact perhaps confirmed in the confidence with which he stated to his publisher, when notifying him of the added movement, that 'with luck it makes the work even more of a whole'.[45]

In the light of this background, the more interesting aspect of the fifth movement might become, not why did Brahms 'add' it, but why did he hold it back? Several explanations would suggest themselves. First, he needed the experience of the work in performance to decide on the appropriateness of a predominantly solo movement: the work at this stage was still (as it would seem to have been for a long preceding period) a work in progress. Second, he knew he required a movement to this text, but was not sure of its musical form. Here the evidence of Marxsen's involvement may well fit in. May cites that 'a well known musician of Hamburg, to whom Marxsen, after studying the score of the German Requiem for a second time, entrusted the responsibility of

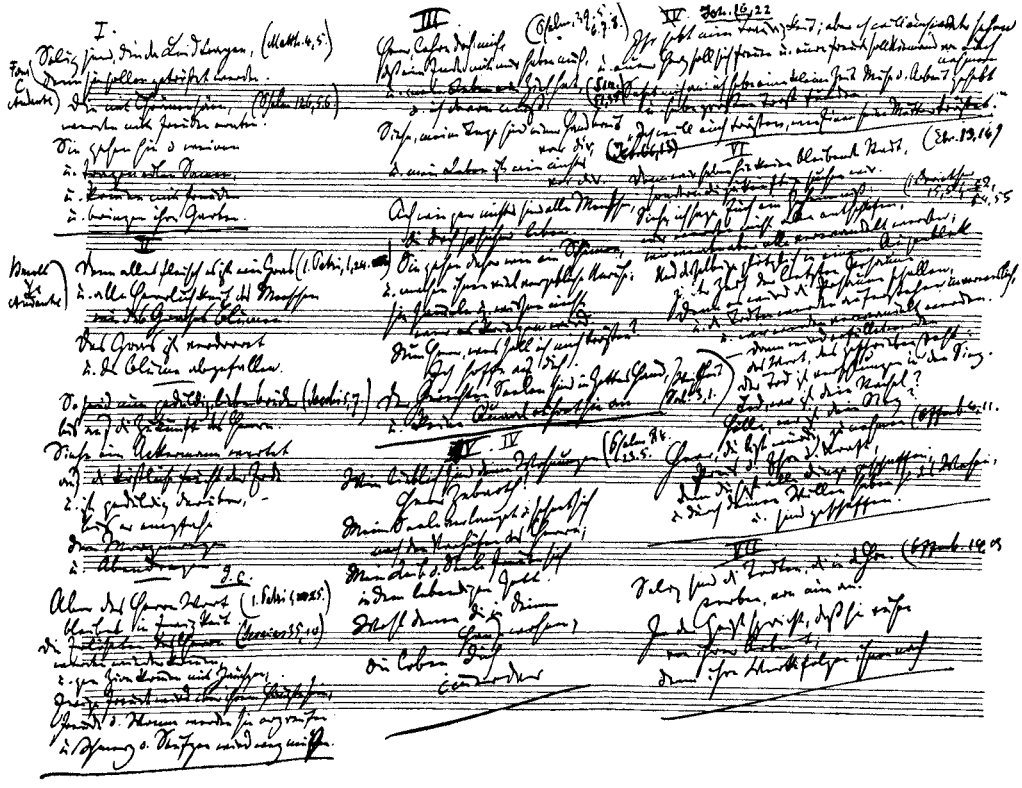

Plate 1 Complete text of the *German Requiem* in Brahms's hand (Wiener Stadt- und Landesbibliothek)

carrying it back from his house in Altona to Brahms in the Anscharplatz, told the present author positively, when she visited Hamburg in 1902, that the soprano solo was added by Marxsen's suggestion'.[46] But perhaps the most convincing view is that the content was too personal for him to give it public exposure until the rest of the work was an accomplished success, that it possesses a degree of intimacy both musically and in its text that he was at first reluctant to expose publicly.

An earlier dating for the text does not of course diminish its possible relationship to his mother's death, but it does suggest that she influenced the entire work. But even in this larger context, a direct connection between the event and the concept and composition seems difficult to sustain: in chronological terms, barely two months covers the time between her death and Brahms's first revelation to Clara of the title and description of much of the music of movements 1–4. A much longer period would seem characteristic of Brahms for such extended music (as all the preceding consideration of the work, apart from the connection with his mother, has suggested). Furthermore, he had had good reason to expect her death for some time before it occurred, as she had long been in frail health. Thus it seems likely that the event was a stimulus to the completion of existing ideas, rather than the source of them, with the text of movement 5 especially associated with her in his mind. This certainly accords with Deiters's recollection that Brahms was 'thinking of her' in this passage and is not contradicted by Clara Schumann's comment that 'we all think he wrote it in her memory though he has never expressly said so'.[47]

However, if the event was important, it seems unlikely that there was only one personal influence on the *Requiem*, and more probable that it was a memorial to other important figures from Brahms's youth, including Schumann. This (despite her comment above) seems implicit in Clara's reaction to the Bremen rehearsal. Brahms was to comment in 1873 to Joachim (who he had hoped would arrange a performance of the *Requiem* for a Schumann celebration in Bonn, but who failed to do so, to Brahms's irritation) 'you ought to know how much a work like the *Requiem* belongs to Schumann. Thus I felt it quite natural in my inmost heart that it should be sung for him.'[48] Schumann, more than anyone else, transformed Brahms's fortunes after an arduous and restricting childhood; the *Requiem*, more than any other work, made him aware of his need to come to terms with his growing achievement. Thus the work may perhaps be seen ultimately as a requiem for his own youth, an account of his spiritual and musical journey thus far. There surely has to be a reason why he chose to make such a personal composition his first great work, rather than the first symphony which had been so long in progress.

On completion of the additional movement, Brahms was immediately anxious for a run-through and approached several friends for a soprano soloist, but without success. The first performance of the fifth movement was on 17 September 1868 in Zurich at a private performance in the Tonhallegesellschaft with Ida Suter-Weber as soprano and Friedrich Hegar conducting. The scores and parts appeared in the following months. The autograph score (from which the full score was made) has a remarkable mixture of page sizes, because, as he told May and several others, 'at the time I wrote it I never had enough money to buy a stock [of paper]'.[49] Though Brahms subsequently expressed the wish to revise the work, he never did so, chiefly (in the recollection of Mandyczewski) because it had become so familiar.[50]