

# Organ Vesper Series

And  
**The Omaha Symphonic Chorus**  
Greg Zielke, Artistic Director & Conductor

Present

**Brahms' Choral Masterworks**  
Dana Sloan, guest conductor  
Lucinda Sloan, mezzo-soprano  
Chamber Orchestra

Sponsored by Alegent Health

Sunday, March 25, 2007

3:00 p.m.

-Program-

**Nänie, op. 82**

**Lass dass nichts nicht dauren, op. 30**

**Vier Gesänge für Frauenchor, zwei Hörner und Harfe,  
op. 17**

-Intermission-

**Rhapsodie, op. 53**

**Tröste mich wieder mit deiner Hülfe, op. 29, no. 2**

**Schicksalslied, op. 54**

[www.organvesper.com](http://www.organvesper.com)

[www.chambermusicomaha.blogspot.com](http://www.chambermusicomaha.blogspot.com)

[www.omahasymphonicchorus.org](http://www.omahasymphonicchorus.org)

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[www.nebraskaartscouncil.org](http://www.nebraskaartscouncil.org)

-Translations-

**Nänie, op. 82**

Friedrich von Schiller

Even the beautiful must die! That which conquers men and gods does  
not touch the brazen heart of Stygian Zeus.

Only once did love soften the ruler of the shades, and still at the  
threshold, in his severity, he revoked the gift.

Aphrodite cannot stanch the beautiful lad's wound, Which the boar  
cruelly tore into this graceful body.

The immortal mother cannot save the divine hero when, falling at the  
Scaean gate, he fulfills his destiny.

But she arises from the sea with all the daughters of Nereus and begins  
her lament for her exalted son.

See! The gods weep, all the goddesses weep because the beautiful  
perishes, because perfection dies.

Even to be a song of woe on loved ones' lips is splendid, for what is  
commonplace descends to Orcus in silence.

(translation by Stanley Applebaum)

**Lass dich nur nichts nicht dauren, op. 30**

Paul Flemming

Let nothing ever grieve thee, distress thee, nor fret thee; heed God's good  
will, my soul compose thee.

Why brood all day in sorrow? Tomorrow will bring God's help benign  
and grace sublime in mercy.

Be true in all endeavor and ever ply bravely; what God decrees brings joy  
and peace, He'll stay thee. Amen.

(Translation by Walter Buszin)

**Vier Gesänge für Frauenchor, zwei Hörner und Harfe, op. 17**

**1. Es tönt ein voller Harfenklang**-Friedrich Ruperti

The harp resounds with wild refrain that glows with love and yearning; it  
fills my heart with deepest pain, and tears flow hot and burning.

O flow, my tears, and soon be shed! O shake, my heart, with beating! My  
love and all my dreams are dead, and all my joy is fleeting.

**2. Lied von Shakespeare**-William Shakespeare

Come away death, and in sad cypress let me be laid. Fly away breath; I  
am slain by fair cruel maid. My shroud of white, stuck all with yew, O  
prepare it! My part of death, no one so true did share it.

Not a flow'r swee, on my black coffin let there be strewn; Not a friend  
greet my poor corpse, where my bones shall be thrown. A thousand sighs  
to save, lay me, O, where true lover never find my grave, to weep there!

**3. Der Gärtner**-Joseph Freiherr von Eichendorff

Wherever I may wander in field and wood and plains, from hill or valley  
yonder, I send you, ever fonder, a thousand sweet refrains.

My garden now discloses the fairest flow'rs I know; A thousand thoughts  
it encloses, and with my garlands of roses a thousands greetings go.

Alas, the one I cherish, she is a thing apart; my wreaths must wither and  
perish, but boundless love will flourish forever in my heart.

I try to bear it gladly and labor bravely forth, and though my heart beats  
madly I work there, singing sadly, and dig my grave on earth.

**4. Gesang der Fingal**-Ossian(MacPherson, 1761)

Weep on the rocks where the storm winds are raging, Weep, O thou  
maiden of Inistore! Bend over the waters thy lovely head; fairer art thou  
than the mountain spirit when he at noon in the brightness of the sun

touches the silence of Morven's height. For he is fall, thy true love lies  
defeated, slain by the might of Cuthullin's sword. Never again will his  
valor inspire him to sheathe his sword in the blood of princes.

Trenar, ah, the fair is dead! Dead, O maiden of Inistore! See his growling  
hounds they howl in the hall; suspicious his ghost walks past the door.

His bow is unstrung and hangs in this castle; hushed silence is where  
deer once did wander.

(English translations of 1, 3, 4 by Jean Lunn)

**Rhapsodie, op 53**

Wolfgang von Goethe

But off to the side-who is there? His path is lost in the thickets, the  
bushes close behind him, the trampled grass springs back, the barren  
waste swallows him up.

Ah, who can heal the pains of a man for whom balm has become poison,  
who imbibed hatred of mankind from the abundance of love? Once  
scorned, now a scorner, he secretly consumes his own merit in an

unsatisfying self-love.

If in your psalter, Father of Love, there is a tone perceptible to his ear,  
refresh his heart! Open his clouded gaze to the thousand fountains  
alongside him as he thirsts in the wilderness.

(English translation by Stanley Applebaum)

**Tröste mich wieder mit deiner Hülfe, op. 29, no. 2**

Psalm 51:12

Grant unto me the joy of Thy salvation, with Thine infinite love uphold  
Thou me.

**Schicksalslied, op. 54**

Friedrich Hölderlin

You walk up there in the light upon soft ground, blessed genii! Gleaming  
divine breezes touch you gently, as the fingers of the woman musician  
touch sacred strings.

Without destiny, like the sleeping infant, the heavenly ones breathe;  
preserved chastely in a modest bud, their spirit blossoms eternally, and  
their blessed eyes gaze in tranquil, eternal clarity.

But it is our lot to find rest nowhere; suffering mankind wastes away,  
falls blindly from one hour to the next, like water hurled from crag to  
crag, for years and years down into uncertainty.

(English translation by Stanley Applebaum)

-Artists-

Founded in 1946, the **Omaha Symphonic Chorus** is proud of its 60  
year tradition of choral excellence. From its inception, OSC's goal has  
been the presentation of diverse choral music to the Omaha community.  
Concert offerings range from the serious classics of Beethoven and Bach  
to the family friendly "Storybook Songs", to the contemporary retrospec-  
tive "American Music Celebration." The ensemble draws experienced  
singers from throughout the region and from all walks of life. Singers  
are chosen annually by audition.

Throughout its history, OSC has been led by a succession of distin-  
guished directors, including the noted composer/arranger John Miller;  
Bruce Hangen, former artistic director of the Omaha Symphony; Dr.  
Craig Jessup, now conductor of the Mormon Tabernacle Choir; and Dr.  
Cina Crisara, former chorus master of Opera Omaha. The chorus is cur-  
rently flourishing in its fifth year under the baton of artistic director, Dr.  
Greg Zielke, Professor and Director of Music at Grace University.

Noted for its rich sound, the Omaha Symphonic Chorus is the frequent guest of other area music ensembles including the United States Air Force Heartland of America Band and the Lincoln Symphony Orchestra. In addition, since 1997 OSC has performed more than a dozen times in the Omaha Symphony's Chamber, SuperPops, and Masterworks concerts.

The Chorus also produces its own distinguished concert season, including its annual, signature event "Christmas at the Cathedral". Presented in the majestic setting of Saint Cecilia Cathedral, this concert has become a holiday tradition for audiences in Omaha and beyond.

Dr. **Greg Zielke** is Professor of Music and Director of the Music Program at Grace University in Omaha, Nebraska. He began teaching at Grace University in 1991. He directs the Grace Chorale, the Masterworks Chorus, and the Women's Choir. In addition, he teaches conducting, choral methods, church music, and private voice. Grace choirs have performed across America and taken concert tours to Australia and Europe. They have also performed with Soli Deo Gloria Cantorum, the Clarion Chorale, the Omaha Municipal Orchestra and the Omaha Symphony Chamber Orchestra. Recently, Grace choirs under Dr. Zielke's direction performed the Fauré *Requiem*, *Amahl and the Night Visitors*, the Mozart *Requiem*, Mendelssohn's *Elijah*, and *Messiah* by Handel.

Dr. Zielke has been conductor and Artistic Director for the Omaha Symphonic Chorus since their 2002-03 concert season. During this time he has prepared the chorus for performances with the Omaha Symphony Orchestra of Haydn's *Mass in Time of War*, Vaughan Williams' *Dona Nobis Pacem*, the *Mass in B minor* by Bach, Beethoven's *Missa Solemnis*, and *Those Glorious Hollywood Musicals* with conductor Jack Everly.

Dr. Zielke received the Bachelor of Arts in Music Education (BA) from Tabor College, the Master of Music Education (MME) from Wichita State University, and the Doctor of Musical Arts in conducting (DMA) from the University Missouri-Kansas City (UMKC). His conducting teachers include Dr. Harrison Boughton and Dr. Eph Ehly.

He is a member of NATS and NMEA and serves as chair of the Repertoire & Standards Committee for Music and Worship for the Nebraska ACDA. He served on the Steering Committee for the 2006 Convention of the North Central Division—ACDA. Dr. Zielke enjoys conducting choral festivals, adjudicating music contests, and leading workshops on music and worship. He serves as Director of Music and Worship at Community Bible Church in Omaha.

His two daughters are active with choral music and music theatre. His wife Tamara is an elementary music specialist for Millard Public Schools.

**Lucinda Sloan**, mezzo soprano, holds degrees in vocal performance from Radford University and the University of Illinois where she was a student of the internationally renowned coach-accompanist John Wustman with whom she continues to perform lieder programs. Dr. Sloan has been a soloist with Opera Omaha, the Omaha Symphony, the Lincoln Symphony, and has soloed with many regional choral organizations. Her recital of Hugo Wolf's *Mörrike Lieder*, with conductor and pianist Lionel Friend of London, England was acclaimed as one of the best performances of "the year if not the decade" and was hailed as an stunning achievement. She has taught at Midland Lutheran College, Dana Col-



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**The Lied Center + 402-472-4700**

**Omaha Symphonic Chorus+402-398-1766**

### **COMING NEXT**

**Sunday, April 1 9:00 & 11:10 a.m.**

Selections from the Great Choral Requiems  
Music by Mozart, Cherubini, Verdi, Durufle  
The Alleluia Singers, Soloists  
Orchestra and Organ  
Open to the Public

**Sunday, April 22, 3:00 p.m.**

**"The Train"**

A Play by Carl Slotbroom/Translated by Dr. Lou Leviticus  
Within the context of the Holocaust, a survivor is someone who escaped death at the hands of the Nazis...but how does the survivor live with memories of what they have experienced and seen?

The Angels Theatre Company and Third Chair Chamber Players  
A New Voices for Hope Project in collaboration with the Lied  
Center for the Performing Arts

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lege, and the University of Nebraska at Omaha. An active scholar in music she has delivered papers at national conferences on Schubert and Beethoven. Active in the humanities she has also served on the national board of the Lilly Fellows Program in the Humanities and Arts.

**Dana Sloan** is the founding director of the Organ Vesper Series. He started the series in 1988 as a part of the music program of the Presbyterian Church of the Cross, where he is the Minister of Music. In October 2003, he led the series into incorporation as a publicly-supported, 501c3 non-profit corporation.

In the 19 year history of the Organ Vesper Series, a great variety of music has been performed by a large number of musicians, local, national and international. Several times the Series has been honored by mention in the *Omaha World Herald* as "Top 10" or "Honorable Mention Top 10" musical events of the season.

#### Omaha Symphonic Chorus

##### Soprano

Emily Anderson  
 Connie Bergman-Palmer  
 Barbara Diener  
 Evelyn Dillard  
 Andrea Giesbrecht  
 Robin Johnson  
 Alice Koehn  
 Sharda Lemburg  
 Mary Jo Madej  
 Betty Ann Maline  
 Abigail Martyr  
 Sue Mollner  
 Alice Renner  
 Marcia Rolfs  
 Laura Schollaert  
 Charity Stahl  
 Sharon Struve  
 Linda Zahn  
 Molly Zimmer

##### Alto

Jamie Anderson-Hoyt  
 Mary Baker  
 Dawn Beckwell  
 Belinda Greiner  
 Kaye Haar  
 Jan Hoden  
 Norma Houchin  
 Ann Koster  
 Shirley Mason  
 Jean McIntosh  
 Vicki Molacek  
 Dee Nielsen  
 Ginger Petersen-Britt  
 Jene' Simpson  
 D. Eileen Smith  
 Dana Stelling  
 Valerie Stoj  
 Sharon Vacanti  
 Ruth Wassom

##### Tenor

Bruce Anderson  
 Brian Botsford  
 Jeff Hatcher  
 Doug Hughes  
 Kirk Johnson  
 Jack Kelley  
 Steve Laire  
 Eric Manley  
 Kent Seetin  
 Dave Sutton  
 Greg Toohey

##### Bass

Gary Barber  
 Curt Johnson  
 Joseph Kehm  
 Ronald E. Kinsey  
 Rick Lienemann  
 John Morey  
 Frank Olson  
 Wayne Palmer  
 Don Rokusek  
 Stan Schmidt  
 Jim Schultz  
 Michael Thorfinnson

#### Omaha Symphonic Chorus Coming Next

World Music Celebration

Saturday, May 12, 2007, 7:30 p.m.

First United Methodist Church

For information call (402) 398-1766

#### Chamber Orchestra

##### Violin 1

Anne Nagosky  
 Scott Shoemaker  
 Amy Sims

##### Violin 2

Keith Plenert  
 Thomas Kluge  
 Frank Seligman  
 Christine Wilson

##### Viola

Judy Divis

##### Cello

Gregory Clinton  
 Patty Ritchie

##### Double Bass

William Ritchie

##### Flute

Jessica Warren  
 Hsing-I Ho

##### Oboe

Julie Gramolini  
 Robert Jenkins

##### Clarinet

Eugene Williams  
 David Malek

##### Bassoon

James Compton  
 Adam Trussel

##### French Horn

Thomas Jöstlein  
 Ross Snyder

##### Trumpet

Eric Proper  
 Carl Eitzen

##### Trombone

Jay Wise  
 Jason Stromquist  
 Tim Dickmeyer

##### Harp

Mary Bircher

##### Timpani

Ken Yoshida

##### Rehearsal pianist

Michelle Grossman

#### -Program Notes-

The human voice is first and foremost a melody instrument; only when gathered in numbers can voices produce harmony. The composers who by and large, have written the most satisfying choral music are the ones who have recognized this fundamental fact. During the romantic era – an age of harmonic investigation if there ever was one – the composers who most effectively mastered writing for the chorus were those who made a point of studying earlier styles, of learning the great tradition of vocal polyphony, from the Renaissance through the Baroque. Few composers have ever equaled Johannes Brahms in a thorough and active knowledge of musical history. His own personal library (now housed at the Society of the Friends of Music in Vienna) is filled with scores and theoretical treatises filled with marginal annotations and other indications that Brahms delved deeply and thoughtfully into a study of all aspects of music, old and new.

Another force at work in Brahms' life was a pervading interest in amateur choral ensembles for male choruses, and choruses of women's voices and mixed voices. These choruses provided an outlet for social interaction and artistic enrichment that comes from making music together in an otherwise bleak industrial society. As a result he enjoyed considerable collaboration with choral ensembles during the early part of his life. From 1857 to 1859 Brahms was conductor of the choir at the court of Detmold. A two year appointment with the Frauenchor of Hamburg followed. It was during this stint that he wrote Op. 17, the four choruses for women's voices, two horns, and harp, that you'll hear today.

Brahms lived and breathed Romanticism. It was a literary, artistic, and philosophical movement that began in Europe in the 18th century and lasted roughly until the mid-19th century. In its intense focus on the individual consciousness, it was both a continuation of and a reaction against the Enlightenment. Romanticism emphasized the individual, the subjective, the irrational, the imaginative, the personal, the spontaneous, the emotional, the visionary, and the transcendental.

Many of these elements are evident in the music presented today. It can be heard in the content and moods of the chosen texts and their fascination with nature and things exotic and mythological. We can hear it in a harmonic language designed to symbolize the emotions of the soul and things transcendent.

Nänie ("Song of Lamentation"), Op. 82, is one of the least known of Brahms's major works, and one of the most exquisitely beautiful in its balance and repose. Schiller's classicizing poem, a lament that "Even Beauty must die," was an obvious choice of text for a piece to memorialize the composer's friend Anselm Feuerbach, a painter. Brahms may have first encountered the poem in a setting by Hermann Goetz, which happened to have been performed in Vienna in February 1880, shortly after Feuerbach's death. In any case, Brahms began his own setting shortly thereafter and completed the work in the summer of 1881. A musical setting of a text that laments the transitoriness of all things, life, love, beauty, and heroic glory might have been a profoundly gloomy work – but it is not. Brahms makes it serene and accepting, quite in the spirit of Schiller's poem and the gentile fatalism of Greek antiquity. The first eight lines of the poem are set in 6/4 time, with soaring and hovering melodic lines intertwining from voice to voice. At the mention of Achilles' mother Thetis rising from the sea to lament the death of her son, the music moves to a bright and serene F-sharp major and a more homophonic texture. The final two lines round out the musical shape with a return to D major and the opening material. Brahms chooses to pass rather quickly over Schiller's final line, "For the Common goes down to Orcus unsung," and to draw out and emphasize the nest-to-last line, "To be even a song of lamentation in the mouth of the beloved is splendid."

*Lass dich nur nichts nicht dauren*, Op. 30, set to a text by Paul Flemming, was composed in the spring of 1856. Like many of the early works it is an exercise in counterpoint, being a double canon at the 9<sup>th</sup> below, with tenor answering soprano and bass answering alto. Out of this rigorous counterpoint Brahms evolves a perfectly symmetrical ABA form which is followed by a powerful "Amen." (From liner notes by Andrew Megill, *O Magnum Mysterium*)

Songs for Women's Chorus, Op. 17, are settings of poetic laments. The first for lost love, the second for a lost lover, the third for unexpressed and unrequited love, and the last for a slain warrior.

Brahms composed his *Rhapsody*, Op. 53 in the autumn of 1869, drawing upon a difficult poem of Goethe's, *Harzreise im Winter* ("Winter Journey Through the Harz Mountains"). Of the poem's 88 lines, Brahms chose to set only the central part, just one quarter of the whole, Goethe's poem was written after a visit to the Harz Mountains in 1777; there he met a correspondent of his, a misanthropic young fellow name Plessing, who had withdrawn from the world in the solitude of nature. Goethe's poem describes one who goes "off apart," praying that the Father of Love may have on the Psalter "a single tone perceptible to his ear," which might "revive this heart." It seems odd that Brahms should choose such a darkly personal text to set to music as a wedding gift for Julie Schumann, the daughter of his dear friend Clara, but there can be little doubt that Goethe's poem spoke to him with unusual directness in his own solitary life. He responded to it with shattering, personal music. The orchestra introduction shivers in its chilly C minor depiction of the winter scene, interrupted by the alto soloist – entering suddenly as if overheard in the middle of a thought – who notices the solitary wanderer. A central section, actually an aria, describes the one who, having been scorned, now scorns all in return.

The harmonic and rhythmic agitation of this section yields magically at the entrance of the men's voices and a turn to a consoling C major and a warmly ardent melody praying for the reconciliation of the wanderer.

The Psalm motet Op. 29, No. 2, III, is from 1857 and further evidence of his interest in Bach, the study of counterpoint, and of his time with the court choir at Detmold. He followed Mendelssohn's interest in the Passions of Bach and of his work to bring them back into the repertoire. This motet is Bachian in its angular melodic line for the fugue subject, reminiscent of Bach's motet *Lobet den Herren*. It is not known why or for what liturgical purpose he chose this text, but this setting exudes tremendous joy.

Even as he turned to compose the *Rhapsody*, Brahms had already begun the *Schicksalslied* ("Song of Fate"), Op. 54. A friend drew his attention to Friedrich Hölderlin's poem "Hyperion's Song of Fate" in 1868. The text, re-enacting the Classical fatalism of the Greeks, spoke to some central element in the composer's own soul; so strongly did it attract him that he drafted a musical setting on the spot. But he was unable to bring the work to completion until May 1871. The problem may have lain in the structure of Hölderlin's grim text; the poem is in two parts, the first depicting the tranquil, eternal bliss of the gods in their abode of light, the second contrasting it with the torments of humanity, driven by a blind destiny. Brahms did not want to end the music in such a negative mood. He considered simply repeating the opening words at the end, but was dissuaded from that course by the conductor Hermann Levi. Instead he concluded the piece with a tranquil orchestral statement of the opening music, thus rounding it off musically with a hint of consolation, while retaining the text's original form. The music of the gods is luminous, sharply contrasted to the hard-driven dormant so mankind, especially the dramatic depiction of "water thrown from crag to crag," followed by sudden silence. The chorus ends on a note resignation, but again – as in the *Rhapsody* – a shift from C minor to C major brings reconciliation.

(From liner notes Telarc CD-80176 by Steven Ledbetter)