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## **Brahms's Ein deutsches Requiem: dialectic and the chromatic middleground**

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**BRAHMS'S *EIN DEUTSCHES REQUIEM*:  
DIALECTIC AND THE CHROMATIC MIDDLEGROUND**

**A Dissertation**

**Submitted to the Graduate Faculty of the  
Louisiana State University and  
Agricultural and Mechanical College  
in partial fulfillment of the  
requirements for the degree of  
Doctor of Philosophy**

**in**

**The School of Music**

**by**

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## TABLE OF CONTENTS

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS.....	ii
ABSTRACT.....	iv
CHAPTER	
1    INTRODUCTION.....	1
2    BLESSED ARE THOSE WHO MOURN.....	23
3    ALL FLESH IS LIKE GRASS.....	39
4    LORD, TEACH ME.....	49
5    HOW LOVELY ARE YOUR DWELLINGS.....	61
6    YOU NOW HAVE SORROW.....	70
7    FOR WE HAVE NO PERMANENT PLACE.....	78
8    BLESSED ARE THE DEAD.....	96
BIBLIOGRAPHY.....	113
VITA.....	116



## ABSTRACT

Brahms's *Ein deutsches Requiem* (1868) has been the focus of much scholarly research. The present study focuses specifically on the work's dialectic: the presentation and resolution of a conflict between mortal suffering and eternal joy. It takes an Schenkerian approach to the tonal content of the piece, which provides a musical reflection of the human spiritual journey to the afterlife. It examines how Brahms brings his chosen texts to life with the aid of musical processes such as mixture, register transfer, coupling, covering lines, and contrasting textures. The present study will cite previous authors who have noted the opposing forces in the *Requiem's* construction. To the wealth of theoretical and historical writing about Brahms's *Requiem* the present study will contribute an Schenkerian account of musical processes that are integral parts of the work's philosophical dialectic.

## CHAPTER 1 INTRODUCTION

Brahms's *Ein deutsches Requiem*, Opus 45, (1868) has been the focus of much scholarly research. The present study focuses specifically on this *Requiem* as dialectic: the presentation and resolution of the conflict between mortal suffering and eternal joy. It takes an Schenkerian approach to the tonal content of the piece, which provides a musical reflection of the human spiritual journey to the afterlife. It examines how Brahms brings his chosen texts to life with the aid of musical processes such as mixture (the exchange of pitches between parallel keys), register transfer (ascending and descending transfers of the melodic line into a new register)<sup>1</sup>, coupling (the connection of two registers)<sup>2</sup>, cover tones (inner voice tones that occur above the essential voice-leading)<sup>3</sup>, and fugal procedures.<sup>4</sup>

David Beach refers to Beethoven's Fifth Symphony, the first movement of which is in C minor and whose last movement is in C major, as a minor-key work "with an extended passage or movement in the parallel major mode."<sup>5</sup> In his analysis of the Fifth Symphony, he distinguishes between major-mode conclusions of varying lengths from mere Picardy thirds to structural shifts from the minor mode to the major mode. This dissertation examines three movements in this *Requiem* that end with major-mode imitative sections that vary in structural significance. In movements two, three, and six Brahms progressively intensifies the shifts to the major mode that accompany motions in the philosophical progression from mortal suffering to eternal joy. Beach's distinction provides a useful insight that helps us understand the

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<sup>1</sup>Heinrich Schenker, *Free Composition*, trans. and ed. Ernst Oster (Hillsdale, NY: Pendragon Press, 2001), 85.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., 85.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid., 107.

<sup>4</sup>William Renwick, *Analyzing Fugue* (Stuyvesant, NY: Pendragon Press, 1995).

<sup>5</sup>David Beach, "Modal Mixture and Schubert's Harmonic Practice," *Journal of Music Theory* 42.1 (Spring 1998), 73.

intensification of the major mode in these movements.

Brahms presents a clear hierarchy in the relationship between major and minor in his *Requiem*. The three movements that begin in minor end in the parallel major key.<sup>6</sup> The shifts from the minor system to the major system occur appropriately when the texts shift from mortal turmoil to the eternal salvation that can only be found in death: "Aber des Herrn Wort bleibet in Ewigkeit" in movement two; "Ich hoffe auf dich" in movement three; and "Herr, du bist würdig zu nehmen Preis und Ehre und Kraft" in movement six.<sup>7</sup> In movement two, this shift to the major system precedes a fugal texture setting forth the promise "Die Erlöseten des Herrn." Movement three works in the same fashion. The shift to major and statement of hope precede a fugal texture bringing the promise "Der Gerechten Seelen sind in Gottes Hand, und keine Qual rühret sie an." Movement six depicts the ultimate battle between life and death. For eighty tumultuous measures in C minor it asks "Tod, wo ist dein Stachel! Hölle, wo ist dein Sieg!" After a five-measure cadence in C major, a fugal texture continues, depicting gifts of praise, honor, and might. Each of these large scale shifts from minor to major reveals a relationship between the two modes in which one is consistently given ultimate structural power over the other. In these movements, major follows and displaces minor. The context of the text and music in each movement will determine how the major mode scale degrees and their minor counterparts will be labeled.

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<sup>6</sup>Peter H. Smith, *Expressive Forms in Brahms's Instrumental Music* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2005), 234-284. In his discussion of Brahms's minor-mode works, Smith points to at least two classifications of modal relations: those that turn away from the tragic and culminate in passages of victorious transcendence," and those that "turn(s) away from darkness but end(s) in quiet consolation or ethereal transcendence."

<sup>7</sup>Heinrich Schenker, *Harmony*, trans. Elisabeth Mann Borgese, edited and annotated by Oswald Jonas (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1954), 3-54. In the first two chapters, Schenker discusses the properties of the natural major system and the artificial minor system. Within these chapters he also uses the term mode in reference to these two systems.

The first word in this work is “Selig.” This blessing precedes all depictions of mortal trials and tribulations in the work. “Selig” also begins the final verse in movement seven “Selig sind die Toten, die in dem Herren sterben, von nun an.” Brahms begins and ends his *Requiem* with the Lord’s promise that not only will we be blessed, but that we already are blessed. He also begins and ends this work with movements that begin and end in major. The movements that do not begin in minor (movements one, four, five, and seven) begin and end in major. Movement four begins: " Wie lieblich sind deine Wohnungen," and movement five begins with the text " Ihr habt nun Traurigkeit," which is immediately countered with " aber ich will euch wieder sehen." Movements two and five are similar in their use of the word “again.” This idea that we will be with the Lord "again" destroys our primitive, linear understanding of time and foretells a progression to salvation. Brahms uses register, texture, and mixture (each in a dialectic context) throughout his *Requiem* to show us that what makes the mortal trials and tribulations manageable is that we are already blessed in life as we shall be in death.

Modal mixture is a process vital to the *Requiem*’s dialectic presentation of life and death. This dissertation uses a definition for mixture that establishes two contradictory forces: major and minor. The significance of using such a definition for mixture is what it excludes, namely the inclusion of any scale degrees besides  $\wedge 3$ ,  $\wedge 6$ , and  $\wedge 7$ , which have hitherto been associated with this process. In *Harmony*, Heinrich Schenker states: “Properly speaking, I think any composition moves in a major-minor system. A composition in C, for example, should be understood as in C major-minor.”<sup>8</sup> This implies that major and minor together form a single entity. This idea is crucial to understanding the tonal processes at work in Brahms’s *Requiem*. While much of this narrative will involve the ways in which major and minor are separate things, the deeper point is

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<sup>1</sup>Ibid., 86.

what appear to be separate things – major and minor, life and death – are parts of a unified, eternal whole.

In Brahms's *Requiem*, mixture involves the exchange of  $\wedge 3$ ,  $\wedge 6$ , and  $\wedge 7$  between parallel major and minor systems. Contrary to theorists like Riemann, who attempted fruitlessly to derive the minor mode from acoustic principles, Schenker argues that the major system is natural (derived from the "chord of nature") and the minor system artificial (created by the artist); thus they enjoy an antithetical relationship:

Only melodic, i.e., motivic, reasons could have induced the artist to create artificially the minor triad as the foundation of the system; and in my opinion it was merely the contrast to the major triad that incited him to fashion his melos accordingly.<sup>9</sup>

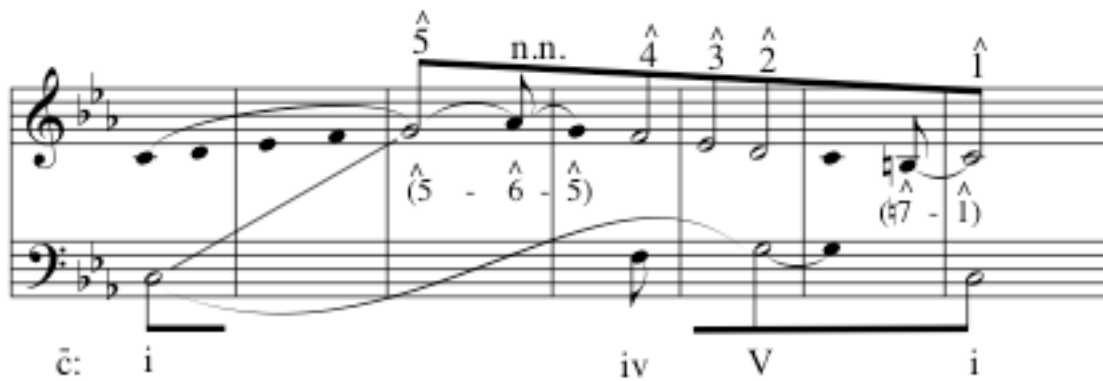
Schenker believes that the minor system scale degrees arise from motivic considerations and nothing else.<sup>10</sup> In the remainder of this study high  $\wedge 3$ ,  $\wedge 6$ , and  $\wedge 7$  will refer to the diatonic forms of those scale degrees in the major mode; low  $\wedge 3$ ,  $\wedge 6$ , and  $\wedge 7$  will refer to the diatonic forms of those scale degrees in the (natural) minor mode. Accidentals will be used to denote chromatic alteration. In major keys, flats or naturals are required to denote the lowered third, sixth, or seventh degrees borrowed from the parallel minor. In minor keys, sharps or naturals are required to denote the raised third, sixth, or seventh degrees borrowed from the parallel major.

The precise choice of accidentals will depend on the key signature of the prevailing tonic and their use may also be required to show the re-introduction of diatonic scale degrees.

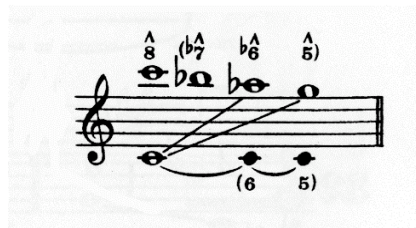
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<sup>9</sup>Ibid., 49-50.

<sup>10</sup>Ibid., 51-52.



(a) A paradigmatic minor system passage illustrating  $\hat{6}$  as neighbor and  $\sharp\hat{7}$  as leading tone.



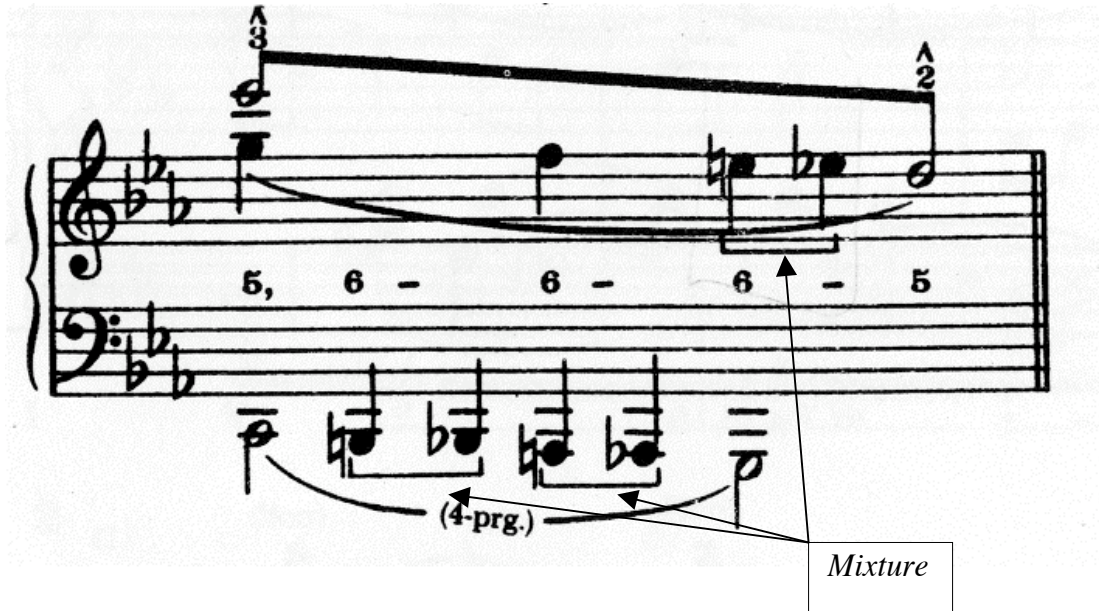
(b) Schenker's *Free Composition*, Figure 29 illustrating  $\flat\hat{7}$  and  $\flat\hat{6}$  as part of a passing motion.

Example 1.1. Variable diatonic scale degrees.

Example 1.1 (a) shows how low  $\hat{6}$  in minor functions as an upper neighbor to  $\hat{5}$ . Conversely  $\hat{7}$  is raised when it moves up to  $\hat{1}$ . This example provides melodic justification for the prevalence of diminished thirds between  $\hat{6}$  and  $\sharp\hat{7}$  in Brahms's *Requiem* in which  $\hat{6}$  resolves down to  $\hat{5}$  and  $\hat{7}$  resolves up to  $\hat{1}$ . The composer creates motives, the internal dynamics of which determine the precise inflections of these variable scale degrees. Low tones tend downward while high tones tend upward. Example 1 (b) shows Schenker's own figure 29 in *Free Composition* in which  $\flat\hat{7}$  and  $\flat\hat{6}$  are borrowed from minor in a foreground progression to  $\hat{5}$ .<sup>11</sup> This is another example of that type of congruence between melodic/melodic function and scale degree inflection.

<sup>11</sup>Schenker, *Free Composition*, 40.

In *Free Composition*, Schenker presents several examples of mixture employed in the middleground.<sup>12</sup> These examples will show that Schenker (as he works to complete what will be his final word on the topic) justifies mixture as a contrapuntal process. Example 1.2 shows motivically derived chromaticism in his middleground graph of Chopin's Etude op. 10, no. 12.



Example 1.2. Schenker's Figure 73.1, Chopin, Etude op. 10, no. 12, mm. 11-18, middleground mode mixture

This example in the minor system shows parallel sixths and a borrowed  $E\flat$  from the parallel major system used as a chromatic passing tone. This chromatic figure leads to an octave displaced  $\wedge 2$  in the *Urlinie*. The bass voice leads here with a chromatic descending 4<sup>th</sup> progression, which borrows two pitches from the parallel major system. Mixture (like that shown in Example 1.2) often relies on a contrapuntal relationship between pitches of the governing system and pitches borrowed from the parallel key. In all three cases the upward tendency of the raised scale degrees is corrected by descending melodic motion.

<sup>12</sup>Ibid., 70.

Figure 73.2 (another example of this logic) explains mixture as the consequence of a chromatic passing tone motion within a melodic fifth descent.<sup>14</sup>

Musical score for "The Swan" from "The Nutcracker" by Pyotr Ilyich Tchaikovsky. The score is in 3/4 time, key of B-flat major, and consists of 7 measures. The melody is in the treble clef, and the bass line is in the bass clef. The score includes various musical notations such as notes, rests, and accidentals. A specific chord is circled in the bass line, and a diagram below the score shows the chord progression: I - IV $\flat$ 7 - V. The diagram also includes a sequence of notes: 7, 5, 3, 4, 3.

Example 1.3. Schenker's Figure 73.2, Handel, Prelude (*Suite de pieces*, 2<sup>nd</sup> collection, No. 1).

This passage features the diminished seventh between E<sub>4</sub> and D<sub>5</sub> and a succession of sixths between the voices. Handel supports  $\flat^3$  in the top voice with E<sub>4</sub> as part of an outer-voice diminished seventh that resolves to a perfect fifth. Here, the inward tendency of the diminished seventh governs the resolution and creates chromatic voice leading at the middleground level. As a harmony, the  $\sharp\text{IV}\flat 7$  (circled above) is the product of both mixture and tonicization,<sup>15</sup> but even more relevant to this dissertation is the fact that it is the product of motivically derived mixture

<sup>13</sup>Ibid., 70.

<sup>14</sup>Ibid., 70-71. Note that in *Free Composition* the figures beneath the succession of sixths are incorrectly aligned and that they should fall under the  $E_b^4$ ,  $D^4$  and  $C^4$  respectively, as shown in Example 3.

<sup>15</sup> Gregory Proctor, "Technical Bases of Nineteenth-Century Chromatic Tonality: A Study in Chromaticism" (Ph.D. diss. Princeton University, 1978), 43-87.



chromaticism. Though D $\flat$  reinforces the downward motion of the melodic line, D $\sharp$  returns as a member of the diatonic cadential six-four.

Schenker's Figure 73.3 shows how Haydn's Symphony No. 104, II shares with the Handel Prelude the resolution of a diminished seventh interval supporting a top voice  $\flat^{\wedge}3$ .<sup>16</sup>

Example 1.4. Schenker's Figure 73.3, Haydn, Symph. 104, II., middleground mixture.

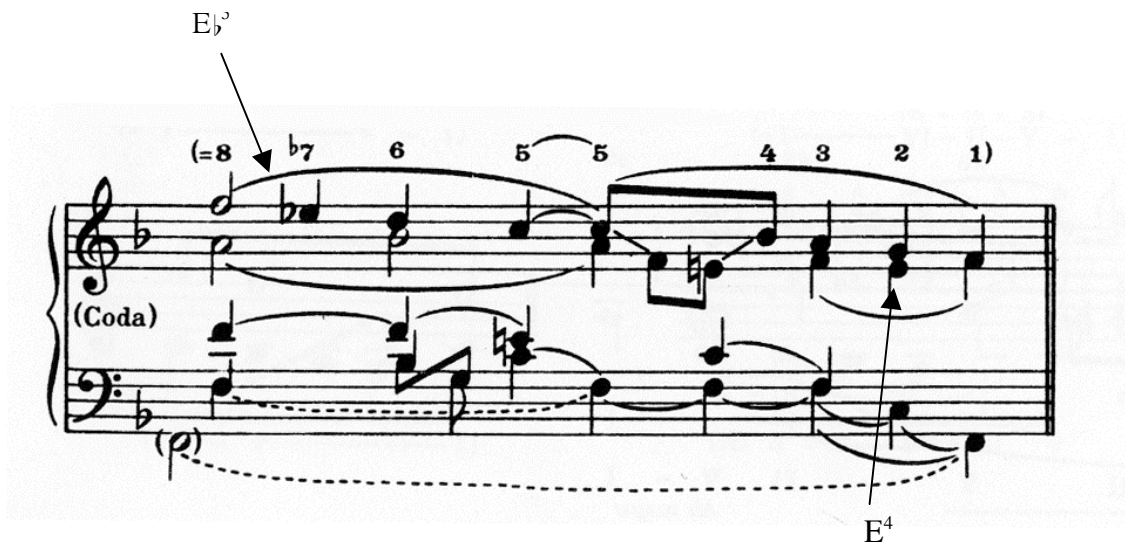
It also shares a resolution to V harmony. The differences between the two examples are that in mm. 6-7 of the Haydn example the inward resolution of the diminished seventh interval occurs between the top voice B $\flat$  and an inner voice C $\sharp$  (indicated with an arrow), which occurs over a tonic prolongation. In m. 7 of the Haydn, C $\sharp$  and B $\flat$  drive the progression to V.

Schenker's final middleground mixture figure in *Free Composition* again highlights the contrapuntal function of mixed scale degrees. Schenker writes, "The octave progression constitutes the coda of the Etude. It includes a minor seventh ( $\flat^{\wedge}7$ ), which is inadmissible in the fundamental line  $\wedge^8-\wedge^1$ . This chromatic alteration tonicizes the IV, but is retracted at V."<sup>17</sup> The chromatic alteration about which Schenker writes is the mixture (involving  $\wedge^7$ ). Schenker notes

<sup>16</sup>Note that in *Free Composition* in the Roman numeral analysis that accompanies this tonic prolongation, which ends in m. 5. The chord that occurs in m. 6 is  $\sharp$ IV six-three as is shown here.

<sup>17</sup>Schenker, *Free Composition*, 71.

that the  $E\flat$  that is a member of the penultimate chord (V) retracts the mixed tone  $E\flat$ . The two  $E\flat$ s that appear before this point preview the fundamental shift to an upwardly tending  $\flat^7$  as a member of the structural dominant.



when it is most prudent to consider that both processes are, in fact, at work simultaneously and even embodied in the same pitch? In this Chopin example, we see that the answer is yes.  $\flat^{\wedge}7$  may simultaneously be the product of mixture and tonicization. It is borrowed from the minor system to tonicize IV. With this figure, Schenker once again demonstrates that the mixed scale degrees are melodic and contrapuntal in function. Because of the demands of melodic function,  $\flat^{\wedge}7$  borrowed from the minor system tends to the major system  $^{\wedge}6$  as a member of the local IV *Stufe* in the coda.

Brahms's *Vier ernste Gesänge*, Opus 121 (published in 1896) present a similar struggle between mortality and immortality – the same dialectic, utilizing the same devices – as the much earlier 1868 *Requiem*. Imogen Fellingner notes that several of the dialectical texts that Brahms sets share a reference to death as their central theme.<sup>18</sup> He also notes the motivic connections and major and minor mode relationships that exist in the Opus 121 song set. The following pages examine the parallel key shifts that occur in two of the four songs, the pitch-specific mixture relationship that exists across the last three songs and the manner in which Brahms associates registral descents in the fourth song of the set with the nothingness of life without love. Each of these processes has its analog in the *Requiem*. The transfiguration about which Beller-McKenna writes here is mixture, the shift from G minor to G major. Moreover, Brahms further strengthens  $B\sharp$  as the last sounding note in song no. 2 and the first in song no. 3. For these reasons, Beller-McKenna focuses more on this B major passage as it relates to the rest of the cycle and less on its enharmonic equivalence to  $C\flat$  major ( $\flat VI$ ) although the latter relationship is clearly essential to the internal coherence of song no. 4.  $\flat VI$  is an essential relationship here and throughout Brahms's *Requiem*.

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<sup>18</sup>Imogen Fellingner, "Das Brahms-Jahr 1983," *Acta Musicologica* 56.2 (July – December 1984), 179-183.

Daniel Beller-McKenna has written extensively on the sacred music of Brahms.<sup>19</sup> In his article on Brahms's *Vier ernste Gesänge*, he questions earlier characterizations of these songs as presenting an almost entirely pessimistic picture of the afterlife. While he agrees that three of the four songs are indeed pessimistic, he argues that the optimism of the fourth song has hitherto been undervalued: "Brahms's choice, placement, and musical settings of texts in Opus 121 will be read as his encounter with a dominant philosophical trend of the age (Schopenhauer's pessimism) and ultimate rejection of that trend in favor of an earlier stance (Romantic Idealism)." The idealism of the fourth song's text from 1 Corinthians 13 makes it distinctive within this set. For Beller-McKenna, the spiritual gift of love is central to the strength of the optimism in this song ("And now, faith, hope, and love abide, these three; and the greatest of these is love.") He contends that Brahms uses the oppositional forces of the tonic E $\flat$  major and the secondary key area B major to highlight differing textual constructions. Beller-McKenna points out that Brahms's use of B major in the middle of the song is "no mere notational convenience: that key recalls the mysterious B $\sharp$  that transfigured song no. 2. And both these sudden changes in harmonic direction stand out as problematic transition points in the cycle."<sup>20</sup>

Examples 1.6 (a) and (b) show how B $\sharp$  is vital to the symmetry and balance of this cycle's

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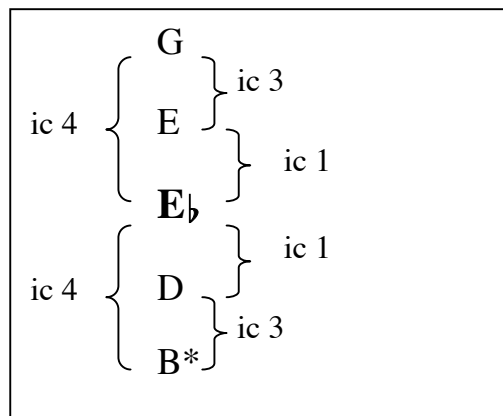
<sup>19</sup>Daniel Beller-McKenna, "Brahms on Schopenhauer: The *Vier ernste Gesänge*, Op. 121, and Late Nineteenth-century Pessimism," *Brahms Studies* 1 (1994), 174: "Schopenhauer's skepticism must have been an anathema to Brahms. Not one to be accused of blind optimism and faith, Brahms nevertheless accepted the traditional Lutheran culture of his native North Germany and maintained a strong sense of spirituality, whether or not that translated into concrete religious beliefs. He had already expressed his spiritual acceptance of death in such works as the *Requiem* and the motet 'Warum ist das Licht gegeben?' op. 74, no. 1, in which an initial inability to come to grips with death is progressively replaced by an understanding of death as 'selig' or 'sanft und stille.' Moreover, Brahms's dark side was colored in the Romantic *Sensucht* and melancholy, not in the vanity and despair expressed by Schopenhauer. And, as we shall see, that dark side never completely overshadowed the sense of hope and progress engendered by the idealist philosophies of the first half of the century."

<sup>20</sup> *Ibid.*, 184-5.

tonal plan. The synopsis in example 6 (a) shows how  $B\sharp$  emerges at the end of song no. 2 as  $\sharp^{\wedge}3$  in G (part of the song's extended Picardy third conclusion). Two large-scale related mixture constructions of the cycle occur between songs two and four. Song two features deep middleground motion from  $\flat^{\wedge}3$  to  $\sharp^{\wedge}3$ , while song four reveals the ultimate function of the  $C\flat/B$  enharmonic pair as a  $\flat^{\wedge}6$  neighbor to  $\wedge^5$ .



(a) A synopsis of the tonal plan for Brahms's Op. 121 song cycle highlights the evolving role of  $B\sharp/C\flat$ .



(b) The symmetrical tonal design that emerges with B major, which is a secondary key area through songs 2,3 and 4 of Brahms's Op 121. The asterisk indicates that B, though salient as a *Stufe* throughout the cycle is not a tonic in any of the four songs.

Example 1.6. Brahms, Op. 121, tonal design of the cycle.

Brahms foreshadows his middleground  $B\sharp$  enharmonic mixture by having the soloist sing that pitch last in song two and first in song three. The progressive intensification of B major

throughout the cycle brings to light the symmetrical tonal plan featuring  $E_b$  at its center as shown in Example 1.6 (b).

Example 1.7. Brahms, Op. 121, end of song no. 3 and beginning of song no. 4.

Brahms furthers the connection between songs two and three by having song three begin with the characteristic descending-third motive from song two (shown in the top voice of song three in Example 1.7). In song three, which moves from E minor to E major, Brahms features  $B\sharp$  as  $\wedge 5$ . Again (as in song two) mixture exists deep in the middleground as minor again gives way to major. The connection between songs three and four also features song three's borrowed  $G\sharp$  from E major. Song three ends with E major (Picardy third) and the  $G\sharp$  resounds as  $A_b$  in the first chord of song four.

Having begun the cycle in D minor, Brahms closes in  $E_b$  major, an unusual large-scale relationship that might signify that an ascent into a progressive acceptance of death is accompanied by a rising tide in the cycle's tonal plan. As Beller-McKenna states, Brahms omits verses 4-10 in song four in order to directly follow verses 1-3 with the mirror metaphor in verse 12, which begins the B major section. In this way, Brahms sets up the B major half of the  $B/C_b$

tonal mirror relationship. Indeed, the song's texts divide into three distinct groups of verses, each dealing with a portion of the spiritual journey to completeness. The first group (verses 1-11) (“If I speak in the tongues of mortals and of angels, but do not have love,” through “When I was a child, I spoke like a child, I thought like a child, I reasoned like a child; when I became an adult, I put to an end childish ways”) is a journey to self-knowledge set in motion by the dialectic construction of verses 1-3. Verse 12 (“For now we see in a mirror, dimly, but then we will see face to face. Now I know only in part; then I will know fully, even as I have been fully known”) presents the mirror metaphor in which mortals journey to complete knowledge, while verse 13 concludes the philosophical progression by defining the place of love among other spiritual gifts where “faith, hope, and love abide, these three; and the greatest of these is love.”<sup>21</sup> Ultimately, the C $\flat$  – B $\flat$  motive takes control of this text as Brahms uses this upper neighbor  $\flat^6$  –  $^5$  motive to return from the secondary B major key area to the home key of E $\flat$  major.

Beller-McKenna does not suggest that the fourth song is entirely optimistic, nor does it need to be to counter the pessimism of the other three songs in this set. In this song, mixture and register transfers embody the mirror metaphor and the philosophical progression to accepting the gifts of death that are central to the dialectic that sets the fullness of love against the nothingness that exists in its absence. Example 1.8 shows the ( $\flat^7$  –  $\sharp^6$ ) chromatic motive in mm. 7-8 with the text “Liebe nicht.” This passage also shows how in his settings of dialectic religious texts the major system represents the rewards of the afterlife, while profound mortal struggles are embodied in the minor system.

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<sup>21</sup> Ibid., 184.

"Liebe nicht"                      "Klingende Schelle"

(7)   (8)   (9)   (10)   (11)   (13)   (14)

mgd.

fgd.

(Eb) V<sup>7</sup> → IV

V ————— I

Example 1.8. Brahms, *Vier ernste Gesänge*, IV, mm. 7-12, mixture.

These motives represent the emptiness of life without love. The  $\flat^{\flat}7$  moving to diatonic  $\wedge 6$  is a close match for the identical motive in Schenker's *Free Composition* Figure 73.4 (reproduced in Example 1.5). In both,  $\wedge 7$  aids a tonicization of the subdominant. The  $\flat^{\flat} \wedge 7$  also coincides directly with the text "Liebe nicht." In mm. 10-13,  $\flat^{\flat} \wedge 6$  moves to  $\wedge 5$  and  $\flat^{\flat} \wedge 3$  moves to  $\wedge 2$  in motives that use mixture pitches and that support a textual comparison of a voice without love to a "klingende Schelle," thus underscoring the absence of love with mixture. The point here is not to fear death, but to fear a life without love. Only in death does one truly experience the eternal rewards of a life filled with love; only in death is the eternal journey complete. In setting the following text about prophetic powers and complete knowledge, Brahms quickly corrects the three borrowed minor scale degrees. These measures show Brahms's mastery of foreground mixture, placing mixed scale degrees precisely where they will most effectively represent a word



or phrase in the text.

In mm. 16-28, Brahms again purposefully introduces motives that derive from mixture. He intensifies his use of mixture as he builds to the shift to B major (enharmonically  $\flat VI$ ). Here (in verse 2) Paul reveals that without love, even complete knowledge and faith enough to move mountains is nothing. This time,  $\flat^{\wedge}3$  ( $G\flat$ ) leads the way as a chromatic passing tone in m. 18. In these measures, Brahms highlights the contrapuntal function of low  $^{\wedge}6$  and  $^{\wedge}7$ . Example 1.9 shows how  $\flat^{\wedge}7$  ( $D\flat$ ) in mm. 19-20 acts as an upper neighbor to the high  $^{\wedge}6$  ( $C$ ).

Example 1.9. Brahms, *Vier ernste Gesänge*, IV, mm. 17-28, mode mixture, register, and text.

Example 1.9. Brahms, *Vier ernste Gesänge*, IV, mm. 17-28, mode mixture, register, and text.

In mm. 17-23, the echoes of the pessimistic side of this dialectic ring through in the  $\flat^{\wedge}3$  and  $\flat^{\wedge}7$  ( $G\flat$  and  $D\flat$ ) motives that involve mixture. Brahms realizes the ultimate optimism of the text that speaks of having enough faith to move mountains in these measures with an arrival on V at the end of m. 23. Hence, he encapsulates his use of mixture within a larger, major-system

framework. In m. 24, instead of realizing its normal tendency downward to C, D $\flat$  takes an uncharacteristic role as a lower neighbor to E $\flat$ . This passage in mm. 24-29 uses the same vocal line as mm. 7-12 except for the added D $\flat$ . Brahms quickly replaces this D $\flat$  with a D $\sharp$  in m. 25. This change reflects the positive message of the previous measures, but as the text “”but do not have love” takes over in m. 24-28, mixture pitches take control again to finish out the passage. C $\flat$  ( $\flat^6$ ) acts as an upper chromatic neighbor to  $\wedge^5$  in mm. 27-28. Accompanied by the growing strength of A $\sharp$  ( $\sharp^4$ ), C $\flat$  takes part in a diminished third resolution to unison. The role of C $\flat$  in this song’s mixture and in the arpeggiated vocal descent in mm. 27-28 explicitly speaks to the emptiness of a life and therefore an afterlife without love. The true optimism of the faith represented in the fleeting D $\sharp$  of m. 25 must wait for the end of this song.

By m. 30 and the beginning of v. 3, the dialectic construction is clear and the emergence of a loveless existence is foretold in mixture. Without love, even if one gives up earthly possessions, one gains nothing (“nichts nütze”). Example 1.10 (a) shows the role of middleground mixture and the converging ascents and descents on  $\wedge^3$  in m. 36. In this passage, Brahms demonstrates that he is a master of using chromatic contrapuntal techniques to tell his story of woe and redemption. C $\flat$  and B major act as mirror images of one another as the text speaks of looking in the mirror to know one’s self fully. All but the downward-stemmed bass line in example 10 (a) derives from the soloist’s melodic line. The C $\flat^4$  in m. 30 is an incomplete upper neighbor to B $\flat^3$  ( $\wedge^5$ ) in m. 29. The solo part then undergoes a register transfer as it leaps down an octave to C $\flat^3$  in m. 30 in another association with mortal suffering. Here begins a stepwise ascent that features C $\flat$  and D $\flat$ .

mgd.

fgd.

29 30 31 32 33 34 36 37

"meinen Leib brennan;"

$\hat{5}$   $\hat{4}$   $\hat{3}$

$b\hat{6}-$   $b\hat{3}-$   $-b\hat{6}$   $-b\hat{3}$

$b\hat{6}-$   $b\hat{7}-$   $-b\hat{7}$

$ii^6$   $vii^{o7}$   $\rightarrow ii^6$   $V$   $\rightarrow ii^6 - \frac{5}{3}$

(a) Brahms, *Vier ernste Gesänge*, IV, mm. 29-37, converging lines.

37 38 39 40 41 42 44 46 47 48

$b\hat{6}-$   $b\hat{7}-$   $-b\hat{7}$   $\hat{5}$   $b\hat{3}-$   $\hat{6}-\hat{5}$   $-b\hat{3}-b\hat{3}-$   $-b\hat{7}$   $b\hat{6}-$

$ii$   $V$   $V$   $I$   $V^7 \rightarrow VI$

(b) Brahms, *Vier ernste Gesänge*, IV, mm. 37-47, prolonged dominant.

Example 1.10. Brahms, *Vier ernste Gesänge*, IV, mm. 29-47, middleground ii and V to  $bVI$ .

The ascent continues through  $E\flat$  to  $F^3$  in m. 33 and converges with the ( $\hat{5}$  -  $\hat{4}$  -  $\hat{3}$ ) descending line in m. 36. Foreground and middleground mixture from this phrase stand out distinctly from previous passages. In mm. 29-37, mixture accompanies the optimistic side of this song's dialectic. By this point in the song, the inevitability of the absence of love is understood by the

audience and embodied in Brahms's usage of lowered  $\wedge^3$ ,  $\wedge^6$ , and  $\wedge^7$ . Example 10 (b) shows how Brahms continues his melodic prolongation of  $\wedge^5$  through m. 47 where he introduces B major as  $C\flat$  major's enharmonic equivalent. In mm. 39-40, Brahms continues to use  $\flat\wedge^7$  ( $D\flat$ ) in an ascending chromatic line that uses mixture in its motion up to  $\wedge^8$  in an inner voice. In m. 40,  $D\flat$  assumes its more traditional function as it tends down to C.  $B\flat$  minor gives way to  $B\flat$  major in m. 41, as minor  $v$  must surrender to the structural  $V$  through to m. 45. For an instant at the beginning of m. 46, Brahms reminds his audience of the governing  $E\flat$  major home key. This immediately precedes  $G\flat$  adopting its new role as  $V/\flat VI$ . Examples 1.10 (a) and (b) together show how  $\wedge^5$  holds structural significance over prolonged pre-dominant and then dominant passages of music. Ascending lines involving mixture stand out in addition to motion to a large-scale  $\flat VI$  neighbor to  $V$  written in its enharmonically equivalent key of B major. Indeed Brahms depends on enharmonic equivalence, as his narrator is about to peer into the mirror and know fully. Here, B major and its enharmonic equivalent  $C\flat$  major embody the mirror metaphor, each taking on the tonal role of the other.

Example 1.11 shows how the B major secondary key area in mm. 48-75 prolongs the  $C\flat^4$  register as it acts as a chromatic upper neighbor to  $V$  in m. 76: hence, B-major acts as its mirror image  $C\flat$  (or  $\flat VI$ ).

Example 1.11. Brahms, *Vier ernste Gesänge*, IV, mm. 48-75 B major secondary key area.

Each of the two phrases in mm. 48-60 outlines a top-voice descent from D $\sharp$  to B (or  $\wedge^3$  to  $\wedge^1$  in B major) as D $\sharp^4$  is mirrored dimly by D $\sharp^3$ . The text here reads, “For now we see in a mirror, dimly, but then we will see face to face.” Mortals look as if into a mirror at an image of death that they cannot know. Brahms shows the sorrow of not yet knowing eternal joy in his mirror descents separated by an octave. Just as B and C $\flat$  mirror one another in this music, so do musical features within the song such as these melodic third descents. In mm. 62-72 the theme of mortal ignorance continues: “Now I know only in part; then I will know fully, even as I have been fully known.” With this statement comes at least the acknowledgment of being fully known. As Beller-McKenna states, this song progresses to acceptance of death. This is not blind optimism and acceptance of mortal trials, but faith in the reward to come given by he who know us completely. As such, this passage ascends again into the C $^4$  register, but not without accentuating a lowered  $\wedge^3$  (D $\flat$ ) in B major. D $\flat$  represents the structural melodic apex of the music from mm. 62-72. While the opening register of this passage is recovered, D $\sharp$  is replaced with D $\flat$ . Such variable scale degrees are related to the other dialectic relationships in this work and in the *Requiem*. Brahms associates registral descents and minor mode scale degrees with the nothingness of mortal existence without love, registral ascents and major mode scale degrees with the victory of an eternal existence filled with love. The entire passage in mm. 48-72 will come to function as a chromatic neighbor to V in m. 75 as this music still sits on the mortal side of this dialectic. As we move into the final line of text, Brahms will create an ultimately optimistic presentation of the afterlife.

As Brahms begins the final verse, the music, still in B major, begins moving back to E $\flat$  major only after the text “Glaube, Hoffnung, Liebe” in mm. 76-82. E $\flat$  returns in mm. 84 with

the text “aber die Leibe ist die größte unter ihnen.” Example 1.12 shows how these measures resemble the music in Figures 73.1 and 73.2 in Schenker’s *Free Composition*.  $D_b^4$  in m. 92 is corrected by  $D_{\sharp}^3$  in m. 94. In the bass motive in mm. 87-89,  $C_b$  is transformed into  $B_{\sharp}$  and ascends. Thus, the substitution of an upward for a downward tendency with respect to the  $C_b/B$  enharmonic pair represents the optimism of an afterlife filled with love. In mm. 92-93 the mixture-derived  $D_b$  moves to C as part of the harmonic resolution of the interval of a diminished seventh:  $D_b$  moves to C at the same time as an inner-voice  $E_{\sharp}$  moves to F.

Example 1.12. Brahms, *Vier ernste Gesänge*, IV, mm. 84-end, mixture and tendency tones.

$D_b$  is both the first and last mixture pitch in the song; here it recalls the song’s opposition between life with and without love. As in Schenker’s examples, a pitch that is the product of mixture ( $D_b$ ) and a pitch that is the product of inflection ( $E_{\sharp}$ ) work together. Most importantly, Example 12 illustrates how upward tending pitches like  $E_{\sharp}$  and  $B_{\sharp}$  represent the transcendence of the afterlife, the Romantic Ideal in which a life of mortal suffering (represented by the low scale degrees borrowed from the minor system) is followed and displaced by ultimate and eternal joy.

Beller-McKenna draws a comparison between the optimism he finds in the fourth song and the optimism that he believes is vital to the 1868 *Requiem*. The present study will elaborate on

Beller-McKenna's insight, seeking to identify and describe the workings of those musical details and processes that convey the transcendent, and ultimately optimistic, narrative of the *Requiem*. The *Requiem's* major-minor dialectic (like that of Op. 121, no. 4) is crucial to its depiction of the eternal battle between sorrow and joy. This dialectic is further expressed through Brahms's use of contrapuntal devices such as register transfer, coupling, and covering lines. There is a slow and steady rise in tension that begs for the transcendence of the resolution that arrives with the major mode fugal passage at the end of movement six. Movement seven deepens the optimism of movement six while it recalls and intensifies the blessings introduced in movement one. Ultimately, the same music (that which ends movements one and seven) comes to represent the blessings of both life and death.

## CHAPTER 2

### BLEST ARE THOSE WHO MOURN

In Brahms's *Vier ernste Gesänge* Opus 121 of 1896, love, hope, and faith are the essential components of a blessed life. Does the message in the 1868 *Requiem* differ in any fundamental way from this ideal? The first line of text in the *Requiem* reads: "Selig sind, die da Leid tragen; denn sie sollen getröstet werden. The first word in the work – "Selig" – offers ultimate spiritual happiness to those who suffer through the ultimate mortal sorrow – the death of a loved one. Thus Brahms initiates the philosophical dialectic that will govern his entire *Requiem*. Those who love enough to mourn in life hope for and have faith in life and death united by the eternal blessings of the Lord. As with several other movements, Brahms uses large-scale mixture to reflect this dialectic: the major system representing the ultimate joy of life after death comes after and displaces the minor system, which evokes the tumult of human suffering. Brahms also pits the high and low registers against one another in a dialectic that can only be unified by significant use of all registers at the end of the movement. Brahms associates the low register with mortal trials in the bass and baritone solos of movements three and six. These are a stark contrast to the movement five soprano solo, which offers the Lord's perspective. We shall see that Brahms's treatment of register at the end of movement six represents the ultimate union of the work's registral dialectic. In the first movement, Brahms combines antithetical texts from the Old and New Testaments, which offer rewards for enduring these trials. Figure 2.1 provides text and an English prose rendering by William J. Bullock.<sup>22</sup>

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<sup>22</sup>Johannes Brahms, *Ein deutsches Requiem*, ed. William J. Bullock (Columbus, GA: Academy Music, 1997). In this English – German commemorative edition, Bullock presents thirty-two biblical translation sources, Brahms's German Bible text, his own prose rendering, and a prosodic adaptation for performance purposes. For the sake of accurate representation of the meaning in Brahms's texts this paper will refer to Bullock's English prose rendering of these texts. All subsequent translations are taken from this edition.



Text	Translation
Selig sind, die da <b>Leid</b> tragen; denn sie sollen <b>getröstet</b> werden.	Blest are they who bear <b>grief</b> , for they shall be <b>comforted</b> . Matthew 5:4
Die mit <b>Tränen</b> säen, werden mit <b>Freuden</b> ernten. Sie gehen hin, und <b>weinen</b> , und tragen edlen Samen; und kommen mit <b>Freuden</b> , und bringen ihre Garben.	They who sow in <b>tears</b> shall reap in <b>joy</b> . they go forth <b>weeping</b> , bearing precious seed, and come (back) with <b>joy</b> , bringing their sheaves. Psalms 126:5,6
Selig sind, die da <b>Leid</b> tragen; denn sie sollen <b>getröstet</b> werden.	Blest are they who bear <b>grief</b> , for they shall be <b>comforted</b> . Matthew 5:4

Figure 2.1. Brahms, *Ein deutsches Requiem*, I, text and translation.

The *Requiem*'s opening text comes from the Beatitudes, which are distinguished by their dialectical construction. Here, the antecedent clause refers to those who bear grief, while the consequent assures their comfort; this is shown in Figure 2.1, where words that form dialectic pairings are given in boldface. Brahms combines New Testament excerpts from the Sermon on the Mount (Matthew 5:4) with Psalm 126. This Psalm comments on the Jews and their return to their homeland and unites the concepts of tears and joy in the same way that the Beatitudes unite grief and comfort. In Psalm 126, God promises the Jews future rewards in the Promised Land in return for the burdens of their faith. He promises that if they sow the seeds of their faith in tears, he will bring them joy. Thus, the first two lines of the Psalm continue in the vein of the Beatitudes. The next four lines expound on this ideal and complete the dialectical text construction of the first movement. They identify the ideas of weeping and joy with the seed and the freshly bundled harvest respectively. As sheaves themselves contain seeds, they are a source

for new life. Ultimately, both chosen texts bring a joyful message of blessings and joy and thus Brahms establishes the philosophical context for the entire work.

Brahms unites these texts to suggest the New Testament fulfillment of an Old Testament covenant. The tonal relationships in this movement evoke a dualism, which supports this work's philosophical dialectic. By moving to D $\flat$  major ( $\flat$ VI) as a substantial secondary key area, Brahms incorporates the pitches G $\flat$ , D $\flat$ , E $\flat$ , and A $\flat$ —the lowered forms of scale degrees 2, 6, 7, and most importantly 3 reckoned from the global tonic, F major. These scale degrees make their presence felt in the setting of the Psalm text, which (unlike the Beatitude text) presents the physical torment of human mourning and suffering. While alternation between two major keys in the foreground embodies Brahms's optimistic view of the after-life, the middleground mixture acknowledges the pain one must first endure in order to experience its ultimate joy.

The placement of text within the large-scale musical form of this movement is vital to portraying the dualism that Brahms creates in his music. Table 2.1 shows the shifts in key as they relate to the overall ternary form and text.

Table 2.1. Brahms, *Ein deutsches Requiem*, I, texts, ternary form, and key areas.

A	B			A			CODA
1-45	47-63	65-76	80-96	96-106	106-119	119-144	144-end
Beatitudes	Psalm Verses			Beatitudes			
F Major	D $\flat$ Major	F Major	D $\flat$ Major	<b>D<math>\flat</math> Major!</b>	F Major	F Major	F Major

This table posits a large ternary form derived from an alternating ritornello key design. The movement's two main key areas are F and D $\flat$ . This movement contrasts a prevalent A theme of forty-five measures to a much less substantial B theme (mm. 47-63). The B theme initially

occurs over a harmonically closed D $\flat$  major passage where it introduces the Psalm verses. The second occurrence of F occurs in mm. 65-76 between two D $\flat$  major sections and is initiated by the sopranos in mm. 61-64. The basses follow with a G $\flat^3$  to G $\flat^2$  octave descent in the key of D $\flat$ . The strength of the recapitulated F pedal in m. 65 overwhelmingly reinforces this music as tonic. Though Brahms returns to tonic in m. 65, he leaves the section harmonically open with a deceptive return to  $\flat$ VI (D $\flat$  major) in m. 80. The sorrow of this text “Sie gehen hin, und weinen” is more appropriate for the mixture embodied in  $\flat$ VI, which governs the music until its function changes in m. 96 preceding the reintroduction of the “Selig sind” text. Here, D $\flat$  reassumes its crucial role as upper neighbor to V and it is one of the rare instances in which this D $\flat$  neighbor is not a member of German augmented sixth harmony, though the German augmented sixth does follow in m. 100 as the chorus sings “Selig sind.” The Beatitude text supports a definitive return to the A material in m. 96 and 106 with the viola music recalling the opening cello entry. As a secondary key area, D $\flat$  introduces lowered  $\wedge^3$ ,  $\wedge^6$ , and  $\wedge^7$  (A $\flat$ , D $\flat$ , and E $\flat$ ) into this movement’s tonal vocabulary without affording them the structural weight that a shift to F minor (which shares F major’s tonal center) would. It also provides the tonal backdrop for the text “Die mit Tränen säen,” in m. 47 and “Sie gehen hin, und weinen” in m. 80. Only as it realizes its true predominant function (and therefore subordinate role to F major) in mm. 100-102 does Brahms allow it to be associated with the movement’s central message: “Selig sind, die da Leid tragen; denn sie sollen getröstet werden.”

Example 2.1 shows how foreground mixture in the opening bars of the orchestral introduction establishes the voice-leading context for mixture throughout the movement.  $\flat\wedge^7$  initiates a descent through both high and low  $\wedge^6$  to  $\wedge^5$  in m. 5.  $\flat\wedge^7$  is the first mixture pitch present in the bass (mm. 2-5). As we have seen in our examination of Schenker’s *Free*

Composition Figure 73.4, it is possible to think of a mixture pitch as also being involved with the process of tonicization of IV as specifically occurs here in mm. 2-3.  $\flat^{\wedge}6$  appears next as a member of  $iv^6$ :  $D\flat^3$  in the lowest moving voice passes to an inner-voice  $C^3$  (m. 5). In the bass in m. 11,  $D\flat$  takes on its more consistent function as a member of a German augmented-sixth chord upper neighbor to  $^{\wedge}5$ . This upper neighbor motive will intensify to become part of this movement's most significant deep middleground mixture in mm. 96 – 104.

Example 2.1 Brahms, *Ein deutsches Requiem*, I, mm. 1-114, middleground.

Both texts in this movement contain a dialectic opposition within themselves but they also contrast with one another in an important way. While the Beatitudes text begins with the ultimate positivism of blessings, progresses to sorrow, and returns to comfort, the Psalm 126 text begins in tears and ends in joy. Example 2.1 also shows how the  $D\flat$  major key areas beginning in mm. 47 and 80 support lowered  $^{\wedge}3$  in the deep middleground to reveal the combined sorrows and joys of this movement's message.

In m. 37, Brahms reinterprets  $D\flat$  as  $C\sharp$  in his intensification of the *Kopft*on A into an A major triad. Example 2.2 shows the first inversion A major triad extends  $V^7$  harmony in mm. 37 and 39.

$B\flat^4$  —————  $B\flat^4 - A^4$   
 $V^7$  ————— evaded I  $vi^6$

Example 2.2. Brahms, *Ein deutsches Requiem*, I, mm. 35-42, evaded cadence.

$C\sharp$  appears again as part of the evaded cadence in mm. 41-42 in which Brahms creates a four-three suspension over F as he ascends through  $C\sharp$  to D. The diminished seventh  $B\flat^4 - C\sharp^4$  resolves inward to the perfect fifth  $A^4 - D^4$ . The larger-scale use of  $D\flat$  ( $\flat VI$ ) begins in m. 47 and marks the shift to the Psalms portion of the dialectic “Die mit Tränen säen, werden mit Freuden ernten.” Brahms pairs the first entry of the harp with this poignant line of text. Brahms will use the harp throughout the work to underscore significant moments in text and music. As  $\wedge^5$  in the new key,  $A\flat$  (lowered  $\wedge^3$  overall) also gains significance in this section.  $D\flat$  major and the growing strength of lowered  $\wedge^3$  contribute to the mixture that embodies the suffering and tears of mortal existence. The sowing in tears is all we know at this point; the reaping in joy is yet to come. In mm. 65-80, Brahms reintroduces the material of the orchestral introduction, this time with added choir. This music now sets the final four lines of Psalm 126, which is the first

reference to an eternal existence symbolized by the bringing of sheaves. Brahms returns to D $\flat$  major in mm. 80-95 to reflect the weeping of the Psalm text. The F in 84 is part of the bass ascent to A $\flat$  and of the unfolding of the D $\flat$  structural harmony, which (along with the preceding and following C major harmonies, constitute a composing-out of the second bracketed motive in Example 2.1. The harp returns in mm. 87-93 with the same arpeggiated figure it employs in mm. 48-60. In its first two occurrences, the harp develops an association with the mourning side of this dialectic but carries on in the “Freuden” that follows.

In m. 88 Brahms makes a significant shift to the joyful text “und kommen mit Freuden, und bringen ihre Garben” and thus sets up his return to the Beatitude text in m. 96. From m. 96 onward D $\flat$  accordingly reassumes its original structural function as an upper neighbor to  $\Delta^5$  in F major in mm. 102-104. The return of F major as the home tonic is the appropriate setting for the optimistic message of this movement. The altos and tenors break from the homophonic choral texture between mm. 106 and 111 in a composed out vi – I. The full chorus re-enters with A theme music in mm. 111-114 following in the same vein as previous A themes with a delayed arrival of the *Kopftön* in m. 114. Most significant here is the solid return to F major and the opening Beatitude text. A $\sharp$  is prolonged melodically through the remainder of the movement, supported by first-inversion A major triads in mm. 127-129 and 135. In these inverted harmonies (as in mm. 37 and 39), Brahms reinterprets D $\flat$  as C $\sharp$ . Mm. 127-129 provide the most expressive setting for the text “die da Leid tragen” and accordingly D $\flat$  in the middleground bears the weight of the structural pre-dominant. This harmonic step is indeed one of the most expressive places in the entire *Requiem*. We will revisit the role of A major at the end of this chapter.

This D $\flat$ /C chromatic motive that uses mixture often gets  $\sharp^4$  (B $\sharp$ ) attached to it; B $\sharp$  is the lower chromatic neighbor of C. The textual consequences of this D $\flat$ /B $\sharp$  to C complex revolve

around Brahms's persistent pairing of monumental suffering with its own dialectical twin: the blessing of eternal salvation in death. The very difficult lesson throughout this work is that the more profound the love, the more profound the mourning.

This movement opens with a tonic orchestral pedal in mm. 1-10, which establishes F<sup>1</sup> as not only tonic, but aurally as the acoustic fundamental of the movement. In mm. 63-64, the low strings descend stepwise from D<sub>b</sub> back to F<sup>1</sup> and the opening orchestral pedal, this time with added choir. This descent is diatonic in D<sub>b</sub> major and brings about the moment at which the antithetical relationship between raised and lowered <sup>^</sup>3 is most evident. The F pedal in m. 65 is unaccompanied and is preceded by eighteen measures of music in D<sub>b</sub>. Upon its return in m. 65, F<sup>1</sup>, which in the beginning firmly asserted its fundamental function, returns in a typically pregnant Brahmsian moment of textural and harmonic ambiguity —is this a dominant or a tonic pedal? The answer is, oddly, both. Its association with iv in mm. 31-43 and 119-124 brings D<sub>b</sub> into play. D<sub>b</sub> and C<sup>#</sup> each surface locally as the third of a triad (minor and major respectively). Example 1.2 shows how A<sub>b</sub> arrives in m. 88 paired with a D<sub>b</sub> major neighbor in m. 96 and establishes D<sub>b</sub> as a structural neighbor to V in m. 102. This return of A<sup>1</sup>, unlike its initial statement (at least temporarily) keeps us in the D<sub>b</sub> orbit. Lowered <sup>^</sup>3 and <sup>^</sup>6 (A<sub>b</sub> and D<sub>b</sub> respectively) work together motivically to bring mixture into the deep middleground. Mixture grows out of a foreground passing tone in m. 4, through a harmonically closed theme in mm. 47-62 and finally into a structural neighbor in mm. 96-102. The ultimate reward of Psalm 126 is also mirrored in Brahms's use of mixture in this movement. <sub>b</sub><sup>^</sup>6 embodies both the overwhelming sorrow *and* joy of death when taken in the context of its F major home key.

Example 2.3. Brahms, *Ein deutsches Requiem* (I), mm. 1-106, D $\flat$  Major supporting  $\flat^{\wedge}3$ .

In m. 96, Brahms creates what appears to be a musical false return, which supports the opening text with the key of D $\flat$  major in m. 96. However, given the return of the opening textual blessing, it makes more sense to consider that here Brahms dissolves the local tonic function of D $\flat$  into its global pre-dominant function, reasserting F as tonic, and thus subordinating earthly suffering to ultimate comfort. In mm. 100-106, the chorus attempts recapitulation, but still in the wrong key with the sopranos beginning on D $\flat$ <sup>4</sup>! Brahms highlights the union of F and D $\flat$  in mm. 96-106 by allowing them to share the Beatitude text. F major makes its definitive return in m. 111.

The blessing of the Beatitude text remains for the remainder of the movement as Brahms leaves behind his middleground pre-dominant D $\flat$  and the idea of sowing in tears for a C $\sharp$  upper neighbor and the promise of comfort. In mm. 102-104, Brahms uses A $\flat$  and B $\natural$  as neighbors in resolutions to G and C respectively. The pairing of A $\flat$  and B $\natural$  in this way will become increasingly significant as we proceed through the *Requiem*.

Mm. 120-144 make up the final large section of music before the Coda. Here, the text states “Selig sind, die da Leid tragen; den sie sollen getröstet werden.”



The image displays a musical score for Brahms' *Ein deutsches Requiem*, I, measures 111-144. The score is written for four staves: two for the vocal parts (Soprano and Alto) and two for the piano accompaniment (Right and Left Hand). The key signature is one flat (B-flat). The score includes various musical notations such as notes, rests, and accidentals. Above the staves, measure numbers 111 through 144 are circled. The piano part features several 7-6 motives, which are indicated by the numbers '7' and '6' with a dash between them. The vocal parts also show specific notes and accidentals, including a C# in measure 135. The score is annotated with various symbols and numbers, including 'P.', '1', 'v7', '1', 'V', and '1', which likely refer to specific musical concepts or editions.

Example 2.4. Brahms, *Ein deutsches Requiem*, I, mm. 111-144, middleground C#.

Example 2.4 shows how this section features a C# neighbor, the enharmonic counterpart of the D $\flat$  neighbor. It shows C# (again in place of D $\flat$ ) as an upper neighbor to C $\natural$ . In these 7-6 motives, Brahms highlights the opposition of C# and D $\flat$ . While the former is merely the third of a local harmony, the latter has already been its own key area, which is present throughout the structural levels of this movement. In both cases, Brahms places the lowered pitches in the bass of first inversion triads; in the latter, C# continues further into the texture in a tenor-voice ascent to D in mm. 131-133. Taken together the enharmonic upper neighbors (D $\flat$  and C#) reinforce the dialectic philosophy of this movement. They are indeed two enharmonically equivalent pitches united with a single purpose.

The relative roles of major and minor systems echo through the coda. If the C# in m. 135 is enharmonically re-notated as D $\flat$ , it makes sense as regards where the bass goes next, i.e. to C

natural, but the A doesn't make sense as B $\flat$ . The strength of A $\sharp$  as *Kopft* ultimately drives this melody to G in m. 143.

Example 2.5. Brahms, *Ein deutsches Requiem*, I, deep middleground and coda.

Example 2.5 shows how Brahms supports lowered- $\wedge 3$  in the D $\flat$  major section, while he ultimately supports  $\wedge 3$  with A major in the second half. The coda (mm. 144-end) corrects the D $\flat$  to D $\sharp$  in the approach to C in the bass in mm. 152-153. It also ultimately confirms the strength of  $\wedge 3$  (A $\sharp$ ) as *Kopft*. Emphasized with octave couplings and leaps of a third to  $\wedge 1$  in mm. 152-157, it is the penultimate melodic pitch. It also is essential on several levels as support for the C $\sharp$  neighbor. Ultimately, the comfort of the Beatitude text rings through the coda embodied in the recurring A – F descents in mm. 150-158.

This study places a high degree of significance on Brahms's treatment of register in his *Requiem*. High and low registers in this work are unified in their own dialectic, like that of the high and low scale degrees of major and minor as well as life and death. Brahms features the low register when his texts represent mortal trials and tribulations and the high register when his texts speak of eternal blessings in the afterlife.

1 Selig sind, die da Leid tragen

**Ziemlich langsam und mit Ausdruck**

2 Flöten

2 Oboen

2 Fagotte

2 Hörner in F

3 Posaunen

Harfe  
(wenigstens  
doppelt besetzt)

Sopran

Alt

Tenor

Baß

Bratschen

1. u. 2. Violoncell

3. Violoncell

Kontrabaß

Orgel (ad lib.)

Pedal

**Ziemlich langsam und mit Ausdruck**

Example 2.6. Brahms, *Ein deutsches Requiem*, I, mm. 1-10, violas as top string voice.

Finally, he saturates all registers and the full ensemble when the achievement of the blessed afterlife is at hand. Example 2.6 shows how the first movement begins with the low F pedal in the organ, contrabass, and cello. Chapter eight will focus on a comparison of portions of the first and last movements, as each begins with the word “Selig,” and with a low F pedal and each ends with the same music, which sets differing texts.<sup>23</sup> Brahms’s orchestration is relevant to this discussion of register here in the first movement and elsewhere. As Example 2.6 shows, Brahms features low-voiced instruments in the opening ten measures. A look at the string section instrumentation reveals that violins are omitted throughout the first movement. This opening focus on the low register depicts the pain that mortals feel when they mourn; this is in poignant contrast to the first word, “Selig.” While high woodwinds, the chorus, and the organ will provide the composer access to over six octaves, the lack of the entire violin section results in a darkening of the orchestral sound in this movement.

The highest sung pitch in the movement comes in m. 150. The sopranos sing an A<sup>5</sup> on the text “getröstet werden.” The basses consistently reach their lowest pitch (F<sup>2</sup>) throughout the movement on precisely the same text. Brahms’s treatment of register is somewhat more complex than simply choosing the highest pitches to represent the good and the lowest pitches to represent the sorrow in this dialectic. Though these associations are at work in this *Requiem*, Brahms’s manipulation of register is bound up with the issue of texture as well. Through mm. 15-45 as the chorus sings the Beatitude text, the texture is almost entirely homophonic, but Brahms pairs the tenors and basses alone in mm. 47-48 to introduce the Psalm 126, which begins with the idea of sowing in tears. As he continues through the Psalm 126 text in m. 79, he again pairs the tenors

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<sup>23</sup> In his dissertation, Walter Westafer provides a detailed comparison of the ends of movements one and seven including detailed examples of the ends of both movements. Walter Westafer, “Over-all Unity and Contrast in Brahms’s *German Requiem*” (Ph.D. diss., University of North Carolina, 1973).

and basses to begin the clause: “Sie gehen hin, und weinen.” This pairing appropriately marks the last tenor and bass pairing in the movement, as Brahms is about to return to the blessings of the Beatitude text for the remainder of the movement.

The harp returns in mm. 150-158 and for the first time is directly associated with the text “denn sie sollen getröstet werden.” Example 2.7 shows how the first movement ends in m. 158 following a five-octave ascent in the harp, which provides registral saturation from F<sup>1</sup> through F<sup>6</sup>. It also shows that the sopranos and altos occupy the register that the violins would have, and provide F<sup>4</sup> in m. 155, reconfirming the last note of the *Urlinie* in its obligatory register (reached at m. 144). The flutes played the highest pitch of the movement (B<sup>♭6</sup>) in m. 139, preceding the sopranos’ ascent to A<sup>5</sup> and surrounded by the text “shall be comforted.” In the final measure, Brahms uses the strings, harp, French horn, and woodwinds in the construction of an F major triad that spans the same five octaves through which the harp just ascended. The combined ascent and final chord unite all registers and therefore the life and death dialectic in a blessed conclusion. We shall see how (as other scholars have noted<sup>24</sup>) Brahms will return to this music to unite the entire work at the end of movement seven.

The high and low registers along the opposition of F major and D<sup>♭</sup> major are emblematic of the relationship between major and minor that appears on several structural levels throughout the movement. On two occasions in this movement, A major reintroduces <sup>♭</sup>A<sup>6</sup> in a way that highlights the promise of the major mode as joy. The A *Kopf*ton places this promise in the most profound structural depths of the movement and its effects ring throughout the coda.

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<sup>24</sup>Ibid.

Fl.

Ob.

Fag.

Hr.(F)

Pos.

152 Harfe *p*

*pp*

*F<sup>6</sup>*

*F<sup>1</sup>*

trö - stet wer - den, ge - trö - stet wer - den.

trö - stet wer - den, ge - trö - stet wer - den.

trö - stet wer - den, ge - trö - stet wer - den.

trö - stet wer - den, ge - trö - stet wer - den.

pizz. *p*

pizz. *p*

pizz. *p*

pizz. *p*

*pp*

*pp*

*pp*

*pp*

Example 2.7. Brahms, *Ein deutsches Requiem*, I, mm. 152-158, final harp ascent.

In the closing measures, high and low registers come together in full orchestration and multi-octave ascents. Ultimately, major follows minor, raised scale degrees follow lowered scale degrees, comfort follows mourning, and each of the items on this list requires its opposite for a true and complete definition of itself.

### CHAPTER 3

#### ALL FLESH IS LIKE GRASS

The second movement is a synopsis of the *Requiem's* governing dialectic between life and death. The minor system governs the first one hundred ninety-seven measures, which set texts from the books of Peter and James. These texts focus on the ending of mortal life and the patient faith that mortals must have that they shall be redeemed. The final one hundred forty measures mark the first instance in the work of a large-scale shift to major accompanied by a fugue-like texture. Movements three and six will undergo similar shifts. Each movement will see a progressive intensification of fugal texture as the *Requiem* builds to its climax in the second half of movement six. In movement two (as in movements three and six) this shift to major and fugue accompanies a shift in the philosophical progression of the text from the end of mortal life to an enduring faith in the Lord's word. In each of these movements, Brahms precedes his major key fugues with a definitive phrase in major. In movement two this moment sets the text "Aber des Herrn Wort bleibet in Ewigkeit." Figure 3.1 provides the German text of the second movement and an English prose rendering. It shows how the second movement is a union of four texts from the Bible's Old and New Testaments. This movement begins with a New Testament text that equates human mortality with the perennial grass and from the first word continues the work's ongoing narrative. The texts through the first and second movement share are joined by the first word in movement two. The first movement ends: "Sie gehen hin, und weinen, und tragen eden Samen." The second movement begins: "Denn "alles Fleisch ist wie Gras." "Denn" here means "for" or "because". Humanity, returns bearing precious seed, because it, like the flowers of the grass and the fruit of the earth, withers but awaits the source of energy that will lead it to rebirth.



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

For “All flesh is like grass,  
and all (the) glory of mankind  
like the flowers of grass.  
The grass has withered  
and the flower fallen.” 1 Peter 1:24

So seid nun geduldig, lieben Brüder,  
bis auf die Zukunft des Herrn.  
Seihe, ein Ackermann wartet auf  
die köstliche Frucht der Erde  
und ist geduldig darüber,  
bis er empfahe den Morgenregen  
und Abendregen.  
So, seid geduldig

So be patient, now, brothers,  
until the coming of the Lord.  
Behold, a farmer waits for  
the precious fruit of the earth  
and is patient about it,  
until he receives the morning  
and evening rain.  
So, be patient. James 5:7

“Aber des Herrn Wort bleibet in Ewigkeit.” “But the Lord’s word endures forever.”  
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.

The redeemed of the Lord  
shall come again, and come  
with shouts of joy into Zion;  
eternal joy shall be above their heads;  
rapture and joy shall take hold of them;  
and pain and sighing  
shall be forced away. Isaiah 35:10

Figure 3.1. Brahms, *Ein deutsches Requiem*, II, text and translation.

The pivotal line of text in movement two “Aber des Herrn Wort bleibet in Ewigkeit” is the moment at which the texts depart from the finite world and ascend to a depiction of an infinite human existence. As the morning and evening rains nourish the grass and the fruit of the Earth, the Lord’s word nourishes those who are patient. The remaining text comes from the Old Testament and looks back to what Isaiah called the joy of the “Die Erlöseten des Herrn.” The ascent of Mount Zion symbolizes the joy that follows pain and sighing. It is everlasting and antithetical to the fleeting glory of mortals. The transition from a finite mortal existence to an infinite spiritual existence lies at the very core of Brahms’s *Requiem*. As noted in the introduction, Daniel Beller-McKenna argues that Brahms is optimistic in his depictions of life

after death both in the fourth and final song of Opus 121 and the earlier *Requiem* (1868).<sup>25</sup> In this movement as in movement one, faith in the Lord's word fuels an optimistic anticipation of the joy in life after death.

Largely due to the amount of time that this movement spends centered in B $\flat$  minor versus B $\flat$  major, it is possible to conclude that mixture exists in the deep middleground. Example 3.1 shows how an exchange between raised and lowered  $\hat{3}$  underlies the movement.

Example 3.1. Brahms, *Ein deutsches Requiem*, II, modal opposition and mixture.

Measure 198 is the first passage that begins in B $\flat$  major, but it is not this shift alone that brings about the structural division of the movement between major and minor. In m. 206, the text and texture accompany the definitive shift to B $\flat$  major. In *Free Composition*, Schenker writes: “At the later levels mixture has even less potential for creating form than it did at the first level. It usually enters the composing-out process only to embellish and extend.”<sup>26</sup> This quote has implications that resound throughout this *Requiem*. The opening tempo *Langsam, marschmäßig* sets the movement up as a B $\flat$  minor funeral march, but the *Allegro non troppo* imitative music in

<sup>25</sup>Beller-McKenna, “Brahms on Schopenhauer,” 170-188.

<sup>26</sup>Schenker, *Free Composition*, 70.

B $\flat$  major derails this dirge with the hope of salvation. The opposition of major and minor is effective only because it works with Brahms's chosen texts and the shift to an imitative texture. The minor half of the movement deals with mortal suffering, while the major half of the movement refers to eternal salvation. Their shared tonic unifies the two halves.

The first movement (in F major) relates to the second movement as its dominant. Example 3.2 shows the initially unaccompanied F to B $\flat$  opening bass line in the second movement, which links the two movements (a union furthered by the tonicization of F major at the end of the first large section in the second movement). This 42-measure section is made up of two passages, which function as a double exposition. Example 3.2 graphs the twenty-one measure orchestral ritornello, which serves as a preface to mm. 22-42 in which the same music accompanies the choir's first entrance. The use of raised scale degrees in this tonicization of F of is a glimmer of the minor-to-major shift that occurs over the movement as a whole. The first melodic motive to establish itself as an emblem of the opening minor section is the ( $\wedge 6$ - $\wedge 5$ ) upper neighbor in mm. 2-3. This is the first hint of minor mode in the movement and it initiates a covering line over the fundamental line (the *Kopft*on D $\flat$ <sup>4</sup> does not arrive until m. 9). Brahms follows this implicitly plagal event with melodic motion to  $\wedge 3$  via  $\wedge 4$ , thus introducing V harmony. As we have already seen in Example 2.1, this neighbor motive will be played out in the deep middleground, as the B section in VI in m. 75 will act as an upper neighbor to V in m. 124.



These opening measures feature yet another antithetical relationship, between the extreme high register and what will become the movement's obligatory register (between B $\flat$ <sup>3</sup> and B $\flat$ <sup>4</sup>).<sup>27</sup> As the music returns to the covering register, Brahms introduces a duality between G and G $\flat$  in mm. 14-21. The choir enters in m. 23 with the alto melody beginning on B $\flat$ <sup>3</sup>. This entry affirms the significance of the opening registral descents and the antithetical relationship between the middle and the extreme high registers.

This duality reflects the opening text from 1. Peter, which compares the glory of man to the flower of the grass. Brahms features VI on several levels throughout the first half where it tonally defines the B section (part of which is shown in Example 3.3 (a). After an arrival on raised  $\wedge^3$  in m. 73, Brahms shifts to G $\flat$  major (VI) where D $\flat$  initiates structural melodic descents from  $\wedge^5$  to  $\wedge^1$  in the new key. D $\flat$  continues to contribute to this movement's deep middleground mixture as the high point of the structural melodic line in this contrasting key area. This G $\flat$  major digression occurs over the text "So seid nun gelduldig, lieben Brüder, bis auf die Zukunft des Herrn." Humanity is suspended in its anticipation of the joy that is to come. The  $\flat\wedge^6$ - $\wedge^5$  motive in m. 112 is an extended and intensified repetition of its counterpart in m. 80; both are local manifestations of the deeper-level  $\wedge^5$ - $\flat\wedge^6$  interaction in the overall tonal plan of the movement. Brahms follows this dominant with a restatement of mm. 1-73 and the movement's shift from minor to major in m. 197. Here, he prepares the B $\flat$  major for its structural role in the second half of the movement. The first half of the movement is about the yearning of humankind to

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<sup>27</sup>Ibid., 107. Schenker states the following about the obligatory register: "No matter how far the composing-out may depart from its basic register in ascending or descending linear progressions, arpeggiations, or couplings, it nevertheless retains an urge to return to that register. Such departure and return creates content, displays the instrument and lends coherence to the whole. The principle of obligatory register applies to not only the upper but also the lower voice. In the upper voice it is usually the register of the first tone of the fundamental line which is later confirmed as the true register..."

transcend earthly bonds and achieve an infinite state of being. Brahms portrays this desire with Picardy third effects at the end of the repeated section.

(a) mm. 73-83, G $\flat$  as a secondary key.

(b) mm. 1-197, deep middleground.

Example 3.3. Brahms, *Ein deutsches Requiem*, II, mm. 1-197, G $\flat$  as a secondary key.

At m. 198, Brahms announces the eternal word of the Lord as a prelude to the second half, and introduces what will become the imitative theme of the second half. The choir basses will take over this theme when it becomes part of the new imitative texture in m. 206.

This theme features the newly raised  $\hat{3}$  as shown in Example 3.4.



Example 3.4. Brahms, *Ein deutsches Requiem*, mm. 206-212, imitative theme.

This subject features a clear octave descent from  $B_b^3$  to  $B_b^2$  in mm. 208-212. However,  $B_b^3$  remains crucial throughout this descent, allowing the line to climb back up on the last word. The result is an exploitation of the entire  $B_b^3/B_b^2$  octave throughout the subject. This is furthered by the accompanying contrabass, which leaps up from  $B_b^2$  to  $B_b^3$  against the last two  $B_b$ s in the fugue subject. This treatment of the subject is yet another example of the registral saturation that musically embodies the blessings of the Lord, here promised to the “redeemed of the Lord.” This point of imitation gives way to homophony in m. 219 as the choir climbs from the bass subject  $B_b^2$  to the climactic soprano  $A^5$  (m. 224, “Freude”)—a symbolic ascent of Zion. The opening descending line is thus contrasted with an upward tendency in the second half.  $G_b$  returns as the Neapolitan in F in mm. 225-229 during the text “Freude wird über ihrem Haupte sein,” revealing the role of mixture in the positive message of this movement.

Just as the contrapuntal texture seems to be taking hold again in mm. 233-237, this Old Testament text recalls the pain of mourning in m. 238. Example 3.5 shows how chromatic neighbor motives accompany the words “Schmerz und Seufzen” in mm. 237-241. These

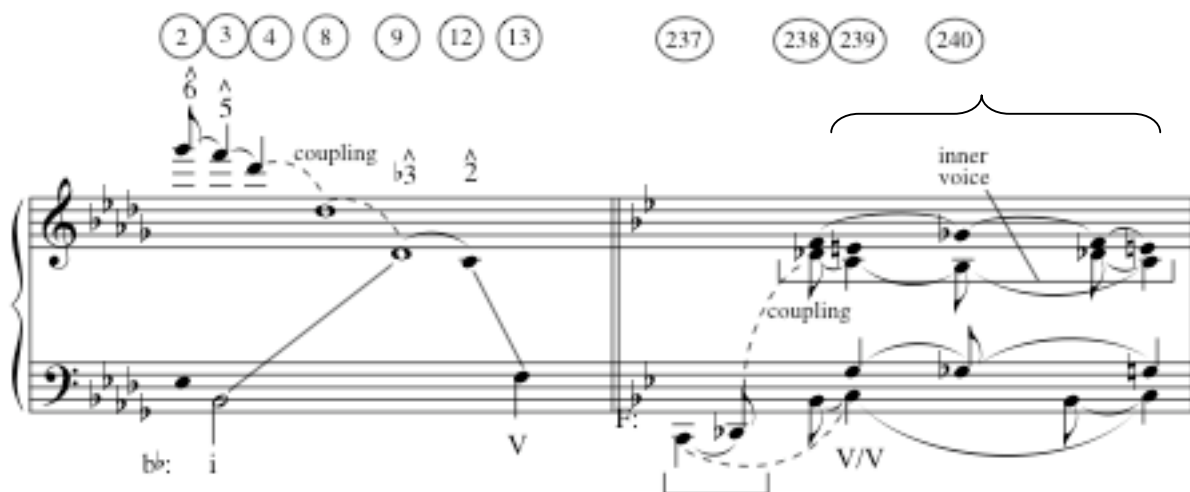
homophonic moments in the second half become increasingly striking as the movement continues.

The image shows a musical score for Brahms' *Ein deutsches Requiem*, measures 237-241. The score is in D-flat major (three flats) and 4/4 time. It features a vocal line (VC) and a piano accompaniment. The vocal line has lyrics: "und Schmerz und Seuf - zen". The piano accompaniment includes a cello/bass line (cb) and a right-hand piano line. The key signature is D-flat major, and the tempo is marked "Andante".

Example 3.5. Brahms, *Ein deutsches Requiem*, mm. 237-241, D $\flat$  as a neighbor.

These measures highlight the textural and modal dialectic of this movement and work to bring the obligatory register and the spiritual quest for immortality into agreement. The celli and double basses introduce D $\flat$  in m. 237, which is picked up by the altos in m. 238. Brahms ascends two octaves and balances the opening section's two-octave descent into the obligatory register. This motive's contrast to the movement's opening descent also strengthens the modal dialectic between the movement's two large sections (minor followed by and displaced by major). Example 2.6 shows how the two neighbor motives (mm. 2-13 and mm. 237-241) work together to complete a registral opposition between the movement's two halves. Taken with the movement's large-scale dualities, these motives embody the philosophical union of life and death in the Lord's infinite blessings.





Example 3.6. Brahms, *Ein deutsches Requiem*, registral opposition.

The minor half of the movement descends through the travails of finite mortal life, while the major half of the movement ascends to eternal salvation.

The “Schmerz und Seufzen” homophonic gesture returns in m. 254, imposing itself upon a point of imitation that began in m. 245. Brahms continues this fluctuation between counterpoint and homophony, which is most marked in mm. 261-290 where the fragments of the fugato subject initiate an episode that begins in the woodwinds and is carried into the choir parts by m. 269. By m. 276 a clear working out of the bass fugue subject supports a tutti texture. As the choir ultimately settles into its closing homophonic statement of joy in mm. 323-337, Brahms gives fragments of the fugue subject to the brass and woodwinds. The strings carry the closing couplings between  $B_b^2$  and  $B_b^6$  recalling the ascent in the harp at the end of movement one. Again, Brahms reveals that the union of all orchestral registers embodies the eternal joy of those redeemed. Further analyses in this dissertation will also reveal that Brahms consistently associates fugal textures like the one in this movement with texts dealing specifically with the promise of eternal salvation and immortal joy.

## CHAPTER 4

### LORD, TEACH ME

In movement three, Brahms combines two Old Testament texts in which the protection of God's hand follows and displaces the mortal struggle to accept death. Movement two clearly embodied this philosophical progression in its own large-scale structural shift from B $\flat$  minor to B $\flat$  major. In movement three, the shift from D minor to D major is slightly different, although once again major follows and displaces minor. In movement three, the Wisdom of Solomon 3:1 follows Psalm 39:5-8. Figure 4.1 provides text and an English prose rendering.

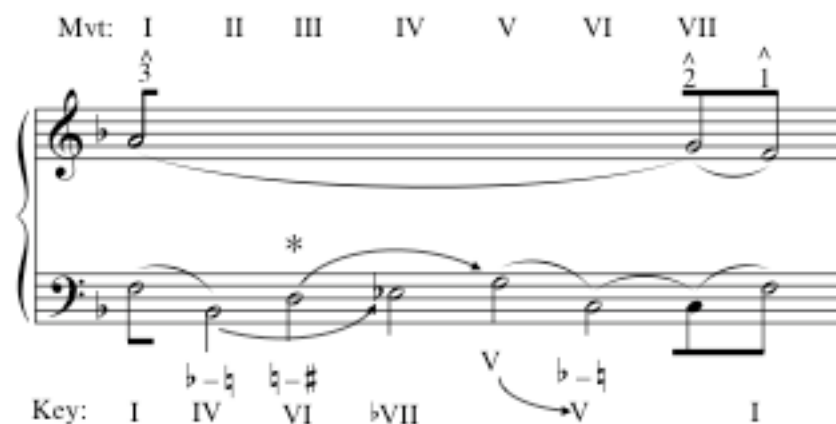
Herr, lehre doch mich, dass ein Ende mit mir haben muß, und mein Leben ein Ziel hat, und ich davon muß. Siehe, meine Tage sind einer Hand breit vor dir, und mein leben ist wie nichts vor dir. Ach, wie gar nichts sind alle Menschen die doch so sicher leben! Sie gehen daher wie ein Schemen, und machen ihnen viel vergebliche Unruhe; Sie sammeln, und wissen nicht wer es kriegen wird. Nun, Herr, weiß soll ich mich trösten? Ich hoffe auf dich.	Lord, teach me, after all, that I must have an end and (that) my life has a limit, and I must reach it. Behold, my days are a Handbreadth before you, and my life is like nothing before you. Ah! Like nothing at all are all men, who nevertheless live so securely. They move around like shadows and cause themselves unnecessary anxiety. They collect (things) and know not who will get them. Now, Lord, in whom shall I find comfort? My hope is in you. Psalm 39:5-8
Der Gerechten Seelen sind in Gottes Hand, und keine Qual rühret se an.	The righteous souls are in God's hand, and no torment touches them. Wisdom of Solomon 3:1

Figure 4.1. Brahms, *Ein deutsches Requiem*, III, text and translation.

While the Psalm deals with the realization that mortal life must end, the Solomon text promises that no torment shall touch the righteous soul. This movement begins with the soloist singing

directly about death, an account absent from the first two movements: “Herr, lehre doch mich, dass ein Ende mit mir haben muß.” This realization is central to the torment that Brahms presents in the *Requiem*; the work’s countervailing optimism depends on the fact that infinite joy follows a limited mortal existence. This text also directly addresses the Lord for the first time in the work. The movement begs the questions, what does end and does this ending bring with it new life? It then places hope in the Lord: “Ich hoffe auf dich.” In this movement, Brahms depicts the human quest to relinquish control over a terminal existence, replacing it with faith in God’s hand.

With this show of faith comes a shift in the tonal plan that governs the entire work. During the first two movements, Brahms has explored a dominant/tonic duality between F and B $\flat$ . This will culminate in another falling fifth shift to E $\flat$  in movement IV (shown by the first arrow in Example 4.1); the D tonality of movement III seems a digression from this pattern. Example 4.1 shows how Brahms uses the parallel relationship between D minor and D major (shown with an asterisk) to make a local turn to the sharp side of the circle of fifths in movement III.



Example 4.1. Brahms, *Ein deutsches Requiem*, III, Interlocking fifth progressions.

The introduction of D minor into the key scheme comes from not only its shared key signature with F major but from its close III relationship to B $\flat$  major. This motion to D major turns out to

be part of the work's second falling fifth progression in later movements (as shown by the second arrow from the D of movement three to the G of movement five. The structural significance of this turn within the entire work may account for the manner in which Brahms sets the D major fugue at the end of movement III with a thirty-five-measure pedal on D. The *Requiem's* seven movements can thus be understood in terms of two interlocking segments of the series of descending fifths: F—B $\flat$ —E $\flat$  and D—G—C—F. Note that Brahms has selected these two segments so that (1) he ends up where he began, in F, and (2) the work begins by moving deeper into the flat side of the tonal field and ends by returning to F via the sharp side of the tonal field. The flat side of the tonal field represents the trials and tribulations of mortal mourning while sharp side of the tonal field represents the gradual acceptance of death's eternal blessings. In his discussion of the solar arrangement of keys around a given tonic, Leonard Ratner observes a historical preference by composers for closely related keys on the sharp side of the home key, which he believes to be in the "household."<sup>28</sup> For Ratner, the keys on the flat side of the tonic may enter but they are not as significant in the overall key scheme. The third movement's D tonality is prophetic in that it is an early forecast of the sharp-side keys of movements five, six, and seven and pivotal in that D minor/major provides a clear link between flat and sharp keys (D major is one of two sharp keys with a flat parallel key).

As shown in Figure 4.2, the movement is in binary form followed by a lengthy fugal texture. Brahms repeats two blocks of text to create two ternary structures that make up each of the binary form sections. The first section overlaps with the next phrase beginning in m. 33 and creates a deceptive cadence in D minor. The string section is the focus of the music in mm. 93-104. Their motive descends through two octaves in an affirmation of D minor in mm. 95 and 97.

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<sup>28</sup>Leonard Ratner, *Classic Music: Expression, Form, and Style* (Chicago: Schirmer Books, 1980), 48-50.

The phrase that begins in m. 105 marks the midpoint in terms of number of measures and it is the beginning of the second section in this ternary form movement.

	<b>Texts</b>	<b>Sections/ Cadences</b>	<b>Key</b>
A	Lord, teach me, after all, that I must have an end and (that) my life has a limit, and I must die.	Mm. 1-33 Elided DC in d	<b>i</b>
	Behold, my days are a handbreadth before you, and my life is like nothing before you.	Mm. 33-66 HC in d	<b>i</b>
	Lord, teach me, after all, that I must have an end and (that) my life has a limit, and I must die.	Mm. 67-93 PAC in d	<b>i</b>
A	Ah! Like nothing at all are all men, who nevertheless live so securely.	Mm. 105-114 PAC in D	<b>I</b>
	They move around like shadows and cause themselves unnecessary anxiety. They collect (things) and know not who will get them.	mm. 118-128 Pl.Cad in d	<b>i</b>
	Ah! Like nothing at all are all men, who nevertheless live so securely.	Mm. 129-138 PAC in F	<b>III</b>
	Now, Lord, how shall I find comfort?	mm. 142-163 Caesura on vii <sup>o7</sup> /A	
	My hope is in you.	mm. 164-173 PAC in D	<b>V - I</b>
	The righteous souls are in God's hand, and no torment touches them.	mm. 173-208 Coda in D (D Pedal)	<b>I</b>

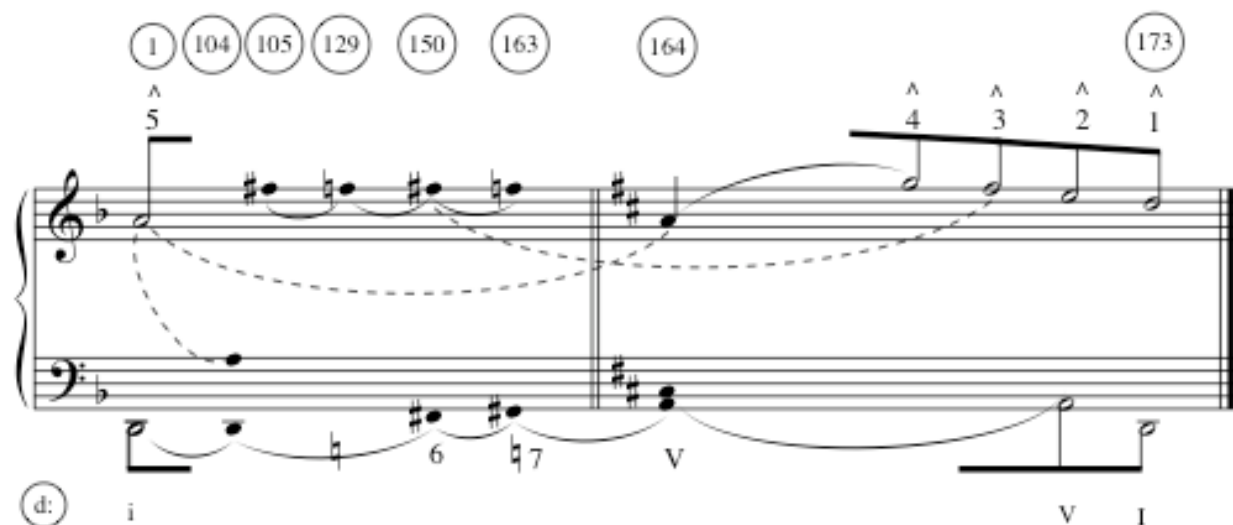
Figure 4.2. Brahms, *Ein deutsches Requiem*, III, text, cadences and tonal progression.

The violins reinforce the D major perfect authentic cadence in mm. 114 by beginning their next phrase on the octave D<sup>5</sup> and D<sup>6</sup>. These shifts from minor to major reflect the text that moves from the dramatic question of one's own mortality to hope and faith in God's hand. The shift from d minor to D major does not last as long as similar motions in movements two or six, but it is fundamental to the movement's philosophical progression. The vii<sup>07</sup> of A major in m. 163 grows out of a V<sup>7</sup> of A in m. 156 where Brahms places the fundamental question of the movement with its answer "Nun, Herr, weiß soll ich mich trösten? Ich hoffe auf dich." The fugue texture of the coda represents a significant intensification of the high ^3 established in m. 173. This fugal texture is indeed one of the most memorable sections in the entire work (a fact not lost on the composer, who ended the first public performance with movement three).<sup>29</sup> Having pointed to the question of personal mortality, Brahms counters with a shift to major and a thirty-five measure tonic pedal, which underlies the Lord's promise to the righteous. He incorporates a strong plagal in mm. 202-205 shifting from IV to iv in mm. 206-207. Each time that Brahms brings together an imitative texture and a shift to major in the *Requiem* he uses their combined power to emphasize the philosophical optimism of the Lord's eternal blessings. A fugue's construction creates a musical echo evocative of voices from all corners of the earth and Heaven joined in a single and vast chorus. In this movement, the lengthy tonic pedal point goes even further to establish the importance of the Solomon text.

The following examples will show how Brahms elaborates this progression from D minor to D major with several foreground and middleground progressions, which either chromatically ascend or shift from minor to major, thus duplicating the movement's overall progress in the small. Example 4.2 shows the deep middleground structure that underlies the first 173 measures.

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<sup>29</sup>Jan Swafford, *Johannes Brahms: A Biography* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1997), 315.



Example 4.2. Brahms, *Ein deutsches Requiem*, III, mm. 1-173, deep middleground.

Example 4.2 shows how in the deep middleground  $F\sharp^5$  displaces  $F^5$  after the key change in m. 164. In and around m. 150,  $F\sharp$  accompanies the text "Nun Herr, wess soll lich mich trösten" and thus projects in life the comfort of the afterlife. The structural shift to D major at m. 164 sets the stage for the m. 173 fugal texture with the words "Ich hoffe auf dich." The fugal texture enters in m. 173 over a tonic pedal that lasts the D major coda. This texture and tonic pedal are the setting for a text about those who have passed into God's hand: "Der Gerechten Seelen sind in Gottes Hand, und keine Qual rühret se an." As is the case with the other fugal textures in movements two and six, this fugue represents the afterlife perspective. Throughout this passage, voices are united in song from across the earth and Heavens as they are comforted by God's hand. What follows is a more detailed account of how Brahms approaches this closing fugal texture and the shift from D minor to D major.

Example 4.3 shows two more detailed middleground graphs of movement three.

Example 4.3. Brahms, *Ein deutsches Requiem*, III, mm. 1-104, middlegrounds.

This movement features the bass soloist, which provides Brahms with an opportunity to continue the antithetical relationship between high and low registers. Example 4.3 also shows how Brahms alternates between the solo and chorus to contrast the soprano and bass registers. The result is that important melodic couplings occur across three octaves. The bass solo descends in mm. 1-16 from  $A^3$  to  $D^3$  to the text “Herr, lehre doch mich, daß ein Ende mit mir haben muß, und mein Leben ein Ziel hat, und ich davon muß,” representing the a profound acceptance of mortal death.

The bass soloist initiates the B section in m. 33, accompanied by full winds two octaves higher than in the opening measures. The music in mm. 33-66 continues the ritornello relationship between the choir and bass solo during the text “Siehe, meine Tage sind einer Hand breit vor dir, und mein leben ist wie nichts vor dir.” The extensive octave doublings in the winds affirm  $B_b$  major here in a stark contrast to what will occur in m. 93. The soloist sings a dramatic rising semitone motive ( $F^3$  to  $F^\sharp^3$ ) in mm. 38-39 to the text “vor dir.” Here, raised  $\wedge^3$  arrives on “dir,” a direct reference to the Lord. In mm. 47-48, this “vor dir” motive appears again in the



solo, this time moving  $A^2$  to  $B\flat^2$ . The sopranos then present the motive in mm. 53-54 where they move  $B\flat^4$  to  $B^4$  and then ascend from C to  $C^\sharp$  in mm. 56 and 57. Their ascent to  $A^5$  and subsequent fall to  $A^3$  in mm. 58-66 is a dramatic reflection of the profound humility of mortal existence before the Lord.

The bass soloist repeats his opening text and melodic descent in mm. 67-93. While he bore the burden of this text by itself in mm. 1-16, the choir joins the soloist in m. 82. Brahms does not repeat the opening tonic anacrusis, but he does add a dominant pedal in mm. 66-69. He extends the text ten measures as the bass solo and choir repeat together the words: “ich davon muß.” Example 3.4 shows how all voices arrive together on octave Ds along with all of the strings, the organ, the trumpets, and the timpani in m. 93. This is the beginning of a significant dismissal of  $B\flat$  in preparation for the arrival of the D major pitch collection.

$B\flat$  major is at it strongest as the tonic of movement two and is closely related to the D minor tonic of movement three. Brahms recalls  $B\flat$  with a tonicization in m. 33. Here, in m. 93, the woodwind  $B\flat$  is no more than a foreground neighbor to  $A^5$  (circled). The string motive confirms D minor in mm. 93-97. Brahms rhythmically augments this motive in mm. 97-101 before landing on bare octave Ds in mm. 102 and 104. This is the midpoint of the movement and D stands alone on either side of two and a half beats of silence. The acceptance of death and the dismissal of  $B\flat$  major (low VI) as a secondary key area are at hand.

Example 4.5 shows that the bass begins to realize the security of the Lord’s blessing in mm. 105-114 as  $F^\sharp$  enters the pitch collection.



Example 4.4. Brahms, *Ein deutsches Requiem*, III, mm. 93-96.

It also shows the ever increasing strength of  $F\sharp$  as the movement's structural  $\wedge^3$ . The music in m. 105 is in D major. Brahms uses  $F\sharp$  in m. 106 as mixture on the text "gar nichts." In mm. 105-114

the text acknowledges secure living even in the nothingness of mortal existence: “Ach, wie gar nichts sind alle Menschen, die doch so sicher leben.”

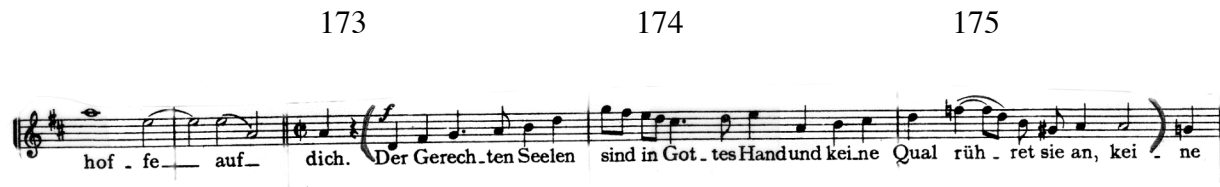
Example 4.5. Brahms, *Ein deutsches Requiem*, III, mm. 105-173, middleground.

The flutes and oboes exchange  $F\flat$  and  $F\sharp$  in a mixture motive mm. 119-125 that accompanies the text “Sie gehen daher wie ein Schemen, und machen ihnen viel vergeblichen ruhe; sie sammeln, und wissen nicht wer es kriegen wird.” As uncertainty in the text increases, the  $F\flat$  remains strong. D major in m. 105 gives way to D minor at m. 126 as the solo completes the line: “Sie sammeln, und wissen nicht wer es kriegen wird.” Brahms intensifies  $\Delta^3$  in D minor in the form of F major (mm. 129-138). Here, the home key of the *Requiem* (F major) represents the security all men find in the promised blessings of the Lord. In mm. 142-163 as the chorus asks “Nun, Herr, weiß soll ich mich trösten?” D minor remains in force.  $F\sharp$  finally reaches into the flutes, double basses and organ in mm. 150, 152 and 154, forecasting the hope in the Lord that begins in m. 164, forecasting hope in the Lord that begins in m. 164.

Brahms consistently surrounds the soloist's mortal struggle with a chorus that makes it their own. Our mortal turmoil is surrounded by the eternal blessings of the Lord, which are shared by the living and the dead. In the first forty-eight measures, the bass soloist departs only twice from the  $D^3 - D^4$  register. In m. 13 as he repeats "und ich davon muß," he ascends to  $F^4$ , which becomes part of the alto and soprano lines in the choral phrase that begins in m. 17. In m. 47 as he sees his life before God, he descends to  $A^2$ ; the choir basses answer with an entrance on  $B\flat^2$  that undercuts the soloist's cadential  $D^3$ . The chorus continues to take on the soloist's struggles through the first one hundred and sixty-one measures until they alone declare: "Ich hoffe auch dich" in mm. 164-172. Example 3.5 shows how movement three undergoes a large-scale shift from d minor to D major in m. 173. The motion between cadential six-four and  $V^7$  in mm. 164-170 in which Brahms raises the third of the six-four chord ( $F\sharp$ ) indeed suggests a pivotal structural role for this moment. In m. 164,  $E\sharp$  ascends to  $F\sharp$ , once again recalling the ascending "vor dir" motive. By m. 169, the melody has climbed from the bass solo register to this stunning choral pyramid as the culmination of this movement's registral ascent and metaphorical ascent into the hand of God.

In movement three (like movements two and six) Brahms precedes the closing major key fugue with a definitive phrase also in major. The D major fugue texture that closes this movement is known for its 35-measure tonic pedal, as strong an affirmation of tonic status as one can imagine, following the sometimes ambiguous tonal function of some other moments in the movement. The choir unfolds the basic elements of traditional fugue construction: expository section (mm. 173-183), modulatory section (mm. 183-205) and closing section (mm. 206-208). The tenors enter first with the fugue subject (shown in Example 4.6) in mm. 173-175. The altos enter in m. 175 with a real answer over the tenor countersubject. In m. 178, the sopranos enter

with the subject, now over one countersubject in the altos and free material in the tenors. The modulation to IV beginning in m. 183 occurs (like everything else in this fugue) over the tonic pedal; this modulatory section is set in motion by the displacement of the diatonic  $\wedge 7$  (C $\sharp$ ) by lowered  $\wedge 7$  (C $\flat$ ) that this makes necessary.



Example 4.6. Brahms, *Ein deutsches Requiem*, III, mm. 173-175, fugue subject.

The modulatory section in mm. 183-205 also features fragments and complete statements of expository material, which appear then in the stretto beginning in mm. 196 and leading to a plagal cadence in mm. 206-208. Of the fugue at the end of movement six, Beller-McKenna writes: “It belongs neither to earthbound time nor divine eternity; it is a pure state of transition between the two.”<sup>30</sup> The fugue here at the end of movement three is not so purely lodged in Beller-McKenna’s state of transition. It does epitomize this movement’s philosophical shift from considerations of mortal turmoil to a gradual acceptance of death. Echoing voices unite and blur the division between life and death declaring at least hope in the Lord’s blessing.

<sup>30</sup>Daniel Beller-McKenna, *Brahms and the German Spirit* (Cambridge, Mass: Harvard University Press, 2004), 93.

## CHAPTER 5

### HOW LOVELY ARE YOUR DWELLINGS

The text for movement four combines three verses from Psalm 84. Figure 5.1 provides text and translation.

Wie lieblich sind deine Wohnungen, Herr Zebaoth!	How lovely are your dwellings, Lord Sabaoth.
Meine Seele verlangt und sehnet sich nach den Vorhöfen des Herrn; mein Leib und Seele freuen sich dem lebendigen Gott.	My soul longs and yearns for the courts of the Lord; my body and soul rejoice themselves in the living God.
Wohl denen, die in deinem Hause wohnen; die loben dich immerdar!	Blest be they who dwell in your house; they praise you forever.
	Psalm 84:2,3,5

Figure 5.1. Brahms, *Ein deutsches Requiem*, IV, text and translation.

This is one of the more optimistic texts in the *Requiem*. Beginning with a clear reference to the afterlife, Psalm 84:2: “Wie lieblich sind deine Wohnungen, Herr Zebaoth!” focuses solely on the blessing of eternal life. Psalm 84:3 continues with the only reference to mortal suffering in movement four: “Meine Seele verlangt und sehnet sich nach den Vorhöfen des Herrn.” The remaining text of this movement provides a picture of rejoicing and praising in life after death “Wohl denen, die in deinem. Hause wohnen; die loben dich immerdar!”

Table 5.1 shows how Brahms uses a five-part design to create a large-scale repetition that differentiates between text that longs and yearns, and text that praises forever. Within this design, Brahms creates two large-scale repetitions in text and music. In previous movements, the overt repetition imparted by imitation occurs only in the foreground; here in movement four, repetition becomes a part of the formal design and the philosophical progression. The musical setting consists of one large section comprised of three ideas. Brahms intensifies the opening text

by repeating it twice: once between two other sentences from the Psalm and again at the end, set with a final repeat of the A theme.

Table 5.1. Brahms, *Ein deutsches Requiem*, IV, translation, form, and keys

TRANSLATION	MM.	FORM	KEYS
<i>How lovely are your dwellings, Lord Sabaoth.</i>	1-23 24-43	A	I – V V
My soul longs and yearns for the courts of the Lord: my body and soul rejoice themselves in the living God.	43-46 46-84	Link B	V
<i>How lovely are your dwellings, Lord Sabaoth.</i>	85-108 108-123	A	I – V – I I <sup>6</sup>
Blest be they who dwell in your house; they praise you forever.	123-153	C	I – V
<i>How lovely are your dwellings, Lord Sabaoth.</i>	153-179	A'	I

The contrasting B theme elicits the mortal perspective, which longs for an eternal existence in the courts of the Lord. Accordingly, the first A section (mm. 1-43) is tonally open, moving from I to V. A second digressive episode in mm. 123-153 carries the texts that combined depicts the promise of blest and eternal life with, and praise for, God. Table 4.1 shows the difference between the harmonic structures of the first two A sections. The music in mm. 85-123 reaffirms the opening tonic as the opening text returns.

Example 5.1 shows the tonal plan that underpins the first half of the movement. We shall see at the end of this chapter how Brahms completes the tonal plan of this design. The A1 and A2 sections in mm. 1-43 are the setting for the courts of the Lord “Wie lieblich sind deine

Wohnungen, Herr Zebaoth!” A2 in m. 23 begins the tonal shift to V. D $\flat$  and G $\flat$  in mm. 69-76 emerge as  $\flat^3$  and  $\flat^6$  respectively.

Example 5.1. Brahms, *Ein deutsches Requiem*, IV, mm. 1-84 deep middleground.

The B section begins in B $\flat$  (V) in m. 46 with the text “Meine Seele verlangt und sehnet sich nach den Vorhöfen des Herrn.” This is the only allusion to mortal suffering. Accordingly, this section of music features mixture in the context of V. B $\flat$  moves to (G $\flat$ ) (labeled  $\flat^3$  above), which eventually acts as a middleground neighbor to F. The interrupted line shown in the middleground is reiterated throughout the movement both in deeper-level and even surface motives. This sort of motivic replication across the structural hierarchy is crucial to G’s role as *Kopftön* in this movement. Example 5.2 also shows how Brahms treats  $\flat^3$  with middleground mixture in m. 71 where it is associated with the text “mein Leib und Seele freuen sich dem lebendigen Gott.” This all occurs on the mortal side of the *Requiem*’s governing mortal/immortal dialectic as the living long for the courts of the Lord.



The music in mm. 46-62 sets the “*Langet und Sehnet*” text of the B section. Even in this foreground progression, the courts of the Lord follow and displace mortal suffering.

Example 5.2. Brahms, *Ein deutsches Requiem*, IV, mm. 46-62, *Langet und Sehnet* motives.

As with other references to suffering like the *Schmerz und Seufzen* motive from movement two, Brahms surrounds these *Langet und Sehnet* motives with the major system. The D $\flat$  to C neighbor figure in mm. 47-48 is the generator of all other chromatic detail up to m. 62, which is the most chromatically saturated passage in the movement.<sup>31</sup> C $\flat$  ( $\flat^{\wedge}6$ ) joins as an incomplete upper neighbor to B $\flat$  in the basses in m. 53 and then as a chromatic passing tone in the basses in m. 55. G $\flat$  enters in m. 60 in its F $\sharp$  enharmonic guise. There is one striking textural difference between the mixture motives in movement two and movement four. While the *Schmerz und Seufzen* motive brings a surrounding imitative texture to a halt, the *Langet und Sehnet* motive (affected

<sup>31</sup>Similarly, Schenker's analysis of *Etude in E $\flat$  minor* by Chopin Figure 6 e) shows a D $\flat$  – C motive between mm. 29 and 32 as the generator for a chromatic descent in the bass that begins in m. 33. Heinrich Schenker, “Etude in E $\flat$  minor, Op. 10, No. 6.” In *The Masterwork in Music 1* edited by William Drabkin, trans., Ian Bent (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994), 81-89.

by the all-encompassing optimism of this movement) initiates a point of imitation. In movement four, Brahms repeats these words in each voice, depicting the growing urgency with a rising tessitura. While mm. 46-62 do ultimately reference the “den Vorhöfen des Herrn,” this movement does complete the journey to the afterlife as much as it contributes to what Daniel Beller-McKenna refers to as a gradual understanding of death as “selig” or “sanft und stille.”<sup>32</sup>

Example 5.3 shows how Brahms accompanies this mortal rejoicing with the approach of an interruption in the tonal structure. The interruption coincides with the incompleteness of the joy found in mortality. This movement has yet to attain the monumental joy of life in death. Thus, mixture in B $\flat$  is essential to the tonal process in mm. 66-84.

The image displays a musical score for Brahms' *Ein deutsches Requiem*, IV, measures 69-84. The score is written for piano, with a treble and bass staff. Above the treble staff, measures 69 through 84 are numbered in circles. The treble staff features a melodic line with various ornaments and a dashed line indicating a continuation or a specific melodic path. The bass staff shows a more complex harmonic structure with many chords and some accidentals. Below the bass staff, a series of Roman numerals (V<sup>7</sup>, I, IV, V, (Ger6), III, vi<sup>6</sup>, IV<sup>7</sup>, II, V, V<sup>7</sup>, IV<sup>7</sup>, I, V) are written, indicating the harmonic progression. A circled B $\flat$  is also present below the first few measures.

Example 5.3. Brahms, *Ein deutsches Requiem*, IV, mm. 69-84, sequence.

D $\flat$  continues to be a vital player in this structural narrative of modal interchange. In mm. 70-71, a dominant seventh on D $\flat$ 7 tonicizes G $\flat$ . In m. 76, Brahms brings the enharmonic relationship between D $\flat$  and C $\sharp$  to bear. While the bass voices, celli, and double basses use D $\flat$  as a chromatic

<sup>32</sup>Beller-McKenna, “Brahms on Schopenhauer,” 174.

upper neighbor to C, the remainder of the ensemble completes a first inversion A major triad in which C $\sharp$  (not the written D $\flat$ ) is decorative. C $\sharp$  (acting like its enharmonic equivalent D $\flat$ ) leads to C $\natural$  in the following first inversion A minor triad, which leads to the falling-fifths progression (C – F – B $\flat$  – E $\flat$  – A $\flat$ ) in m. 78-82. Brahms then uses falling fifths to recover the tonic. In this passage, Brahms uses mixture to represent the longing and the yearning of the text. He represents the return of joy with a falling-fifths progression that lifts the music back to the dominant in m. 84. We will see how Brahms returns to falling fifths construction in movement six when he depicts the ultimate battle between life and death.

The remaining text in this movement focuses entirely on the blessings of the afterlife. Brahms continues to incorporate mixture into the music after m. 85. The difference between the A material in mm. 1-43 and the return of A in mm. 85-123 is that the return remains in the home key of E $\flat$ . Any mixture can now be understood in the context of I rather than V. Example 4.4 shows how Brahms uses C $\flat$  (lowered- $\wedge 6$ ) in foreground German sixth chords in mm. 113 and 121 to counter C $\natural$  (diatonic- $\wedge 6$ ) in mm. 110 and 118. In this passage, Brahms approaches F $^5$  twice, the first time through a dramatic descent from G $^6$  in m. 108. He also unfolds his two resolutions of augmented sixth chords in mm. 113-115 and again in mm. 121-123 in preparation for the arrival of  $\wedge 2$ . Regardless of the order in which C $\natural$  and C $\flat$  occur in this passage, the diatonic C $\natural$  gains more significance than the chromatic C $\flat$ , which ultimately serves as a middleground chromatic passing tone in m. 121. Brahms emphasizes the diatonic C $\natural$  neighbor with a tonicization in mm. 117-118, and replaces each C $\flat$  with a foreground C $\natural$  (mm. 113 and 121), before eventually resolving to the necessary B $\flat$  as diatonic vi here supplants chromatic  $\flat VI$ . Thus in mm. 117-118, Brahms features the diatonic and raised scale degrees of the tonic E $\flat$

major. Because B $\flat$  (V) is the harmonic goal of this passage, the local change from C $\flat$  to C is less important than its delayed move to B $\flat$ .

Example 5.4. Brahms, *Ein deutsches Requiem*, IV, mm. 112-123, middleground interruptions.

All of this occurs as Brahms approaches yet another imitative passage in mm. 123-153. Here, this texture sets a text of eternal praise to the Lord.

Brahms eventually dismisses lowered- $\wedge 3$ ,  $\wedge 6$ , and  $\wedge 7$  as he moves into the final A'' section, which begins in m. 154. Their persistence to this point reveals that Brahms includes human “Langet und Sehnet” in his presentation of the blessed afterlife. The nostalgic nature of this final A section is revealed in the return of D $\flat$  in m. 168 after the D $\sharp$  in m. 165. The first mixture pitch in Example 5.5 comes in the form of C $\flat$  (lowered- $\wedge 6$ ) as a chromatic passing tone in the alto voice in mm. 149-153. This serves to color the pre-dominant harmony with the creation of a half-diminished ii six-five. This motive recalls earlier motivic passing motions that move through C $\flat$  in mm. 72-78 and C $\sharp$  in mm. 113-118. D $\flat$  arrives in m. 157-159 as the seventh of an applied

dominant to IV and continues on the surface as a passing tone in the bass between E $\flat$  and C. G $\flat$  appears in m. 161 as a member of a longing and yearning V $^7$ /D $\flat$  that does resolves to F in m. 164, where it is a member of an inverted V $^7$ /V on the last beat.

Example 5.5. Brahms, *Ein deutsches Requiem*, IV, mm. 149-167,  $\flat^{\wedge}3$ ,  $\flat^{\wedge}6$ , and  $\flat^{\wedge}7$ .

Slightly removed from the surface this creates an incomplete neighbor in the upper voice. Brahms tonicizes G minor with F $\sharp$  in mm. 166-167. In this moment the upward tending F $\sharp$  replaces the downward tending G $\flat$ . Brahms replaces the mortal yearning associated with G $\flat$  with a definitive F $\sharp$  and admiration for the courts of the Lord.

Example 5.6 shows how the music in mm. 108-123 represents the altered context of the two A sections in the music: the first precedes a text of longing and yearning and the second approaches the text of eternal praise. The foreground descent from G $^6$  to F $^5$  in mm. 108-115 (shown in Example 5.5) gives way in the middleground to an ascending coupling from G $^4$  to G $^5$  in mm. 86-154.

Example 5.6. Brahms, *Ein deutsches Requiem*, IV, mm. 85-end, deep-middleground.

With registral traverses and involvement in middleground mixture, Brahms associates the *Kopfton* G with mortal longing for the courts of the Lord. Appearing at the beginnings of phrases and sections, G often falls to F in middleground interruptions of the fundamental line that permeate the texture. This interrupted line occurs for the last time in m. 153, as shown above. Brahms saves the definitive, connected descent, free of mixture, for the final nine measures and the final setting of the text “Wie lieblich sind deine Wohnungen.”

## CHAPTER 6 YOU NOW HAVE SORROW

The text for movement five is a union of three Biblical texts. Isaiah from the Old Testament and John from the New Testament, lead to the deuterocanonical Ecclesiasticus. This movement begins with an address from the afterlife to those suffering in their mortal life. Figure 6.1 provides text and translation.

Ihr habt nun Traurigkeit; aber ich will euch wieder sehen, und euer Herz soll sich freuen, und eure Freude soll niemand von euch nehmen.	You now have sorrow; but I will see you again, and your heart will rejoice, and no one will take your joy from you. <small>John 16:22</small>
Ich will euch trösten, wie einen seine Mutter tröstet.	I will comfort you as one is comforted by his mother. <small>Isaiah 66:13a</small>
Sehet mich an: ich habe eine kleine Zeit Mühe und Arbeit gehabt, und habe großen Trost funden.	Look at me: I have had toil and labor for (only) a little time, and have found great comfort. <small>Ecclesiasticus 51:27 [35]</small>

Figure 6.1. Brahms, *Ein deutsches Requiem*, V, text and translation.

The text from John 16: 22 begins “Ihr habt nun Traurigkeit;” but is immediately followed by God’s promise: “aber ich will euch wieder sehen.” This is the second of two texts in this *Requiem* that use the word “again” in reference to being with the Lord (the first occurring in movement two). Isaiah 66:13a continues the progression with a promise of imminent comfort. The closing text is from the perspective of one who recalls mortal existence and offers proof of newfound comfort. It also begins with a directive: “Sehet mich an,” a command that appears simple on the surface. To open one’s eyes is something that mortals do instinctively during their waking hours; the kind of seeing called for in this text, however, is far more profound. This spiritual vision can only be part of the eternal afterlife and the joy of this vision can only be experienced after the monumental suffering of our mortal existence. The closing excerpt thus

serves as the culmination of the first two by acknowledging both mortal suffering and immortal joy and comfort.

The soprano solo register of movement five presents a natural antithesis to the bass solo in movement three and as the last movement composed,<sup>33</sup> it adds an essential balance to the overall structure of this *Requiem*. By adding movement five, Brahms places the optimism of movement four at the work's center. While movement four depicts longing and yearning for eternal joy against the blessings of the living God, movement five looks back from an immortal existence to the toil and work of mortal life. Table 6.1 provides the formal structure aligned with the translation for movement five.

Table 6.1. Brahms, *Ein deutsches Requiem*, V, formal structure and translation.

	TRANSLATION	MM.	KEYS	FORM
Solo	You now have sorrow; but I will see you again, and your heart will rejoice, and no one will take your joy from you.	1-28	I – V	A
Chorus	I will comfort you as one is comforted by his mother.			
Solo	Look at me: I have had toil and labor for (only) a little time, and have found great comfort.	28-49	$\flat$ III – $\natural$ III – V	B
Chorus	I will comfort you			
Solo	You now have sorrow; but I will see you again, and your heart will rejoice, and no one will take your joy from you.	49-82	V – I	A'
Chorus	I will comfort you as one is comforted by his mother		I	Coda

<sup>33</sup>Michael Musgrave, *Brahms: "A German Requiem"* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996), 9.





Example 6.1 also shows a deep middleground melodic descent from  $\wedge 5$ . As Brahms uses the D major secondary key area to prolong the opening *Kopftön* through much of the first twenty-seven measures, this example also shows that Brahms finally supports  $\wedge 5$  in the home key of G in m. 64, at “und euer Herz soll sich freuen.” The strong arrival of B major in mm. 33 is part of a larger B major passage, which lasts until m. 40. This accentuation of III displaces and corrects lowered-III in mm. 28-31. The displacement of B $\flat$  by B $\sharp$  makes textual as well as musical sense here because the textual shift from toil to comfort coincides with the replacement of a chromatic *Stufe* with its diatonic counterpart. This striking reminiscence of III $\sharp$  in m. 70 amplifies  $\wedge 3$  within the structural melodic descent in the home key of G major, which also feature a layering of two of the texts beginning in m. 65. While the soprano solo sings “und euer Herz soll, sich freuen, und eure Freude soll niemand von euch nehmen,” the chorus accompanies singing “Ich will euch trösten, wie einen seine Mutter tröstet.” This structural arrival on G major abounds with the ideal of the Lord’s blessings of comfort both in mortal life and in the afterlife. The opening G in the bass is an anacrusis to the first full measure and the first violins’ G $^3$  is an incomplete upper neighbor to the metrically stressed melodic F $\sharp$  on the first downbeat. D is the salient melodic pitch in the movement; occurring approximately fifty times in the soprano solo and other structural linear progressions. It initiates the final connected melodic descent to  $\wedge 1$  in mm. 64-72, is the first structural melodic pitch at the beginning of the B section in m. 28, and appears as an important secondary key area. What follows is a more detailed account of more foreground mixture that facilitates the deep middleground opposition between D major and D minor.

Example 6.2 shows how Brahms first employs mixture in mm. 12-13 to reflect the text that refers to mortal sorrow.

[A] Solo: "You now have sorrow, but I will see you again." Add Chorus: "I will comfort you as one is comforted by his mother."

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12 13 14 15 16 17 18 19 20 21 22 23 24 25 26 27

Example 6.2. Brahms, *Ein deutsches Requiem*, V, mm. 1-27.

Brahms introduces F natural (local  $\flat^3$ ) in the melody, which in m. 12 descends through m. 14 in the key of D minor. This arrival in minor appropriately accompanies the word “Traurigkeit” (“sorrow”). F# (local  $\sharp^3$ ) returns in the violas in m. 14, with the text “aber ich will euch wieder sehen,” and resolves up to G in m. 16 as the promise of comfort begins. The passage cadences in D major in m. 23. This foreground opposition of D major and D minor supports the middleground F $\flat$  to F $\sharp$  mixture whose purpose is to unify the dialectical halves of this opening text “Ihr habt nun Traurigkeit / aber ich will euch wieder sehen.” The text that Brahms chooses for the chorus and solo in mm. 19-27, “Ich will euch trösten, wie einen seine Mutter tröstet” clarifies the blessing of comfort that will happen when the Lord sees us again.

Example 6.3 shows how Brahms continues to use the antithetical relationship between D major and D minor in his approach to  $\flat$ III (B $\flat$  major) in m. 28 where the soprano solo sings its profound text “Sehet mich an: ich habe eine kleine Zeit Mühe und Arbeit gehabt.”

Example 6.3. Brahms, *Ein deutsches Requiem*, V, mm. 27-49.

Example 6.3. Brahms, *Ein deutsches Requiem*, V, mm. 27-49.

Example 6.3 also shows how Brahms set this promise of motherly comfort that follows toil and work using middleground mixture in mm. 27-33.  $F\sharp_4$  appears in m. 27 as  $\wedge 5$  of  $B\flat$  major, which follows in m. 28. In mm. 27-31, a bare octave approach to lowered-III ( $F-B\flat$ ) initiates a descending sixth-progression ( $D^5 - F\sharp_4$ ) in the soprano solo, setting “Mühe und Arbeit” that recalls the descending sixth progression of mm. 11-14 ( $F\sharp_5 - A^4$ ), which sets the “Traurigkeit, ihr habt und Traurigkeit.” By analogy to the “Schmerz und Seufzen” and the “verlanget und sehnet” chromatic voice-leading motives involving mixture in earlier chapters, the  $F\sharp$  to  $F\sharp_4$  middleground motive that results from the juxtaposition of future comfort and present toil shall be known as the “Mühe und Arbeit” motive.

Examples 6.1 and 6.2 show how D major surrounds the opening G music and establishes its role as a secondary key area. Example 5.3 shows D major as local tonic in m. 41 leading to the

return of the solo line to the opening text in m. 51. This passage, which returns to the text of the opening 26 measures, looks forward to a promise of eternal comfort. In the third large section of the movement (mm. 41-60), Brahms continues to employ mixture between D major and D minor. This passage is preceded by a passage in which D major reassumes its role as V. After the cadence in m. 46, G enters the progression in m. 48 as part of a plagal motion to D, which accompanies the entrance of the text from John. The added seventh in mm. 49 quickly returns the movement to tonic.

Example 6.4 shows mm. 51-60 as the affective and harmonic fulcrum of the entire movement.

Example 6.4. Brahms, *Ein deutsches Requiem*, V, mm. 51-60, “Traurigkeit” motive.

The G $\flat$ -F resolution in the soprano (mm. 56-57), reinterprets the “Mühe und Arbeit” motive in mm. 12-16. Also, mm. 56-57 set up a brief tonicization of E $\flat$  minor. The contrapuntal nature of this passage (B $\flat$  is the governing bass note, leading to a German augmented-sixth in m. 58) suggests a new G $\flat$ -F “Traurigkeit” motive. The viola and woodwind C $\sharp$ s in m. 60 transform D

major once more into V<sup>7</sup> of G and initiate a four-measure structural progression back to G, which arrives in m. 64.

With this definitive arrival in the home key, Brahms combines the opening text with the transitional text from mm. 24-27: “Ich will euch trösten, wie einen seine Mutter tröstet.” In mm. 64-72 Brahms completes the movement’s fundamental fifth progression in G major with a definitive cadence in m. 72. The soprano solo ends this movement with a gentle rocking motion between ^6 and ^5 in mm. 76-79 that recalls the first violins in mm. 3-4, its own line in mm. 4-13, and the chorus sopranos in mm. 47-48.<sup>34</sup> This sets up the plagal cadence of mm. 79-82, with a final pianissimo arrival in the woodwinds. The subdominant harmony at the end of the movement foreshadows movement six, which will be in C minor/major. Brahms concludes this movement with motion into the extreme high register. This transfer of the goal tonic to G<sup>6</sup> accompanies the promise of the comfort to come in the afterlife. As we shall see in movement six, mortal acceptance of the true and profound joy of the blessed afterlife requires an equally profound union of all registers as well as a structural union of major and minor systems in conjunction with a striking use of the closing fugue texture.

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<sup>34</sup>Ratner, *Classic Music*, 16, 21. Ratner discusses pastoral elements in several genres and their association with the Nativity. The gentle rocking motion between ^6 and ^5 draws from genres such as the lullaby which are characterized by such pastoral elements.

## CHAPTER 7 FOR WE HAVE NO PERMANENT PLACE

Walter Westafer describes movement six as the climax of Brahms's *Requiem*.<sup>35</sup> While Daniel Beller-McKenna does not dispute this claim, he does point out that all texts before movement seven portray the afterlife from a prophetic standpoint.<sup>36</sup> This dissertation supports both of these views. It finds support for Westafer's viewpoint in the manner in which Brahms combines texts from several different books of the Old and New Testaments, in effect collapsing all of Biblical time from the Prophets to the Apocalypse into a single moment of time – “in einem Augenblick.” Humanity, created and blessed by God, awaits a permanent place in eternity also created and blessed by God. It also makes sense from a tonal standpoint to agree with Beller-McKenna. The first and last movements confirm that the work as a whole is in F major. Movement six, centered in C, is the penultimate stage in the series of fifths journey back to F major from the point of furthest remove, D major, at the end of movement three.<sup>37</sup> The battle between life and death depicted in this movement – though climactic – is not the critical issue here; rather, this movement deals with the acceptance of death, a crucial step toward an acceptance of the pain and suffering of mortal existence as a whole. If we have loved enough to mourn, then we have been blessed; conversely, the more profoundly we have loved, the more profoundly we have suffered. Acceptance of this blessing is difficult and it does not arrive until movement seven. Figure 7.1 shows text and translation for movement six, which depicts the penultimate step towards a victorious life in death.

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<sup>35</sup>Westafer, “Over-all Unity and Contrast in Brahms's *German Requiem*,” 270.

<sup>36</sup>Beller-McKenna, *Brahms and the German Spirit*, 95.

<sup>37</sup>Ratner, *Classic Music*, 225. This work discusses the point of furthest remove as a practice that “stems from church modal practice.” For Ratner, this sonata form principle involves the use of the “third or sixth scale degree as a turning point.” This is the case between movements one and seven in F major and movement three in D major in the *Requiem*.

Denn wir haben hie keine bleibende Statt,  
sondern die zukünftige suchen wir.

Siehe, ich sage euch ein Geheimnis:  
wir werden nicht alle entschlafen,  
wir werden aber alle verwandelt werden;  
und dasselbige plötzlich,  
in einem Augenblick, zu der Zeit  
der letzten Posaune!

Denn es wird die Posaune schallen,  
und die Toten werden auferstehen  
unverweslich, und wir werden  
verwandelt werden.

Dann wird erfüllet werden das Wort,  
das geschrieben steht:

“Der Tod ist verschlungen in den Sieg!”

“Tod, wo ist dein Stachel!  
Hölle, wo ist dein Sieg!”

Herr, du bist würdig zu nehmen  
Preis und Ehre und Kraft;  
denn du hast alle Dinge erschaffen;  
und durch deinen Willen haben sie  
das Wesen, und sind geschaffen.

For we have no permanent place  
here, but we are seeking one to come.

Hebrews 13:14

Behold, I tell you a mystery:  
we shall not all sleep,  
but we shall all become transfigured,  
and become so suddenly,  
in the blink of an eye, at the time  
of the last trumpet!

For the trumpet shall resound,  
and the dead shall rise  
incorruptible, and we shall  
be transfigured.

Then shall be fulfilled the word  
has been written:

Corinthians 15:51, 52, 54b, 55

“Death is swallowed in victory!”

Isaiah 25:8

“Death, where is your sting,  
Hell, where is your victory!”

Hosea 13:14

Lord, you deserve to receive  
praise and honor and power;  
for you have created all things,  
and by your will they have  
their being and were created.

Revelation 4:11,13

Figure 7.1. Brahms, *Ein deutsches Requiem*, VI, text and translation.

Brahms approaches the moment of mortal death with the last call of the trumpet. Isaiah 25:8 exclaims “Der Tod ist verschlungen in den Sieg,” then Hosea 13:14 asks “Tod, wo ist dein Stachel! Hölle, wo ist dein Sieg!” On the other side of death, there is only “Preis und Ehre und Kraft.” Death is swallowed by the afterlife and suffering is displaced by eternal joy after monumental grief.

Figure 7.2 provides the large-scale structure of text and music in movement six.



TEXT		MM.	KEYS/TEMPO	FORM	
For we have no permanent place here, but we are seeking one to come.	}	1-81	C minor (Andante)	Intro	A
<b>Behold, I tell you a mystery:</b> we shall not all sleep, but we shall all become transfigured, and become so suddenly, in the blink of an eye, <b>at the time of the last trumpet!</b>	{ 1-81 }				
<b>For the trumpet shall resound,</b> and the dead shall rise incorruptible, and we shall be transfigured.	}	82-104	(Vivace)	A1	
Then shall be fulfilled the word that has been written:	}	109-122		Link	
“Death is swallowed in victory!”	}	127-150		A2	
“Death, where is your sting, Hell, where is your victory!”	}	152-207	to C Major	Codetta	
<i>Lord, you deserve to receive praise and honor and power;</i> for you have created all things, and by your will they have their being and were created.	{ }	208-234	C Major (Allegro)	B	B
<i>Lord, you deserve to receive praise and honor and power;</i> for you have created all things, and by your will they have their being and were created.	{ }	235-244		Episode 1	
<i>Lord, you deserve to receive praise and honor and power;</i> for you have created all things, and by your will they have their being and were created.	{ 208-349 }	244-290		B	
<i>Lord, you deserve to receive praise and honor and power;</i> for you have created all things, and by your will they have their being and were created.	{ }	291-304		Episode 2	
<i>Lord, you deserve to receive praise and honor and power;</i> for you have created all things, and by your will they have their being and were created.	{ }	304-316		B	
<i>Lord, you deserve to receive praise and honor and power;</i> for you have created all things, and by your will they have their being and were created.	{ }	316-330		Episode 3	
<i>Lord, you deserve to receive praise and honor and power;</i>	}	330-349		B	

Figure 7.2. Brahms, *Ein deutsches Requiem*, VI, text and music: form and key areas.

Fugal procedure in the second half of this movement depicts an imitative call of voices from all the corners of Heaven and earth. The first half of the movement sets texts from throughout the Bible, which culminate in the questions from Hosea 13:14: “Tod, wo ist dein Stachel! Hölle, wo ist dein Sieg!” This large A section is characterized by its governing minor system and its contrast to the fugal texture of the major, fugal second half, which answers: “Herr, du bist würdig zu nehmen Preis und Ehre und Kraft denn du hast alle Dinge erschaffen; und durch deinen Willen haben sie das Wesen, und sind geschaffen.” Together, these texts bring the entire premise of the work to bear. In this movement, no mortal struggle goes unresolved: “Denn wir haben hie keine bleibende Statt, sondern die zukünftige suchen wir; wir werden nicht alle entschlafen, wir werden aber alle verwandelt werden.” One line of text in particular from the book of Isaiah sums up the essence of Brahms's *Requiem*: “Der Tod ist verschlungen in den Sieg!” Immediately preceding the fugal texture employed at the end of the movement, death is swallowed in victory and the chorus asks “Hölle, wo ist dein Sieg,” with much more rhythmic emphasis given to the word “wo” than “Hölle.” The sting of death goes unnoticed and there is no victory in Hell. The fugue that follows releases the tension left undischarged ever since the pedal at the end of movement three. In movement six, Brahms brings the shift into a clear fugal texture into alignment with the structural shift into the major system. In this way, movement six resolves the musical dialectics that exists in its contrasting textures and systems.

Figure 7.2 also shows the large-scale shift from minor to major between the two large sections in movement six. By the beginning of the sixth movement, large-scale modal shifts from minor to major, and the spiritual narratives they accompany have become a characteristic feature in the *Requiem*. This shift marks the climactic transition from a depiction of mortal suffering and mourning to eternal joy in the afterlife. The text “Siehe, ich sage euch ein Geheimnis” stands out

due to its brief transitional function in the introduction. ♭II becomes V of F# minor in mm. 28-34 and instantly shifts the tonal center a tritone away from the opening key.

Example 7.1 shows how movement six opens with two-chord emblem (V – ii) that recurs in different guises in many places such as the woodwind D – F motives in mm. 16-17. The process at work in these opening chords will grow in significance as the movement continues until the definitive arrival its closing C major tonality in m. 349 on the word: “Kraft.” This tonic concludes a series of full ensemble chords set progressively to the words “Tod” in mm. 178-180, “Hölle” in mm. 184-186, and eventually “Kraft” in mm. 289-290, 315-316 and 349. These chords saturate all registers and emphasize the major players in the ultimate battle between life and death. The remaining examples in this chapter will demonstrate how Brahms gradually establishes the structural harmonies of C major over C minor and how these chords resolve the registral dialectic in this *Requiem*.

Example 7.1. Brahms, *Ein deutsches Requiem*, VI, mm. 1-16, mixture.

Brahms continues to use  $\sharp^6$ ,  $\sharp^7$ , and  $\sharp^3$  in mm. 1-13 until  $\flat II$  arrives in m. 14 to remind us that mm. 1-16 present only the hope, not the realization, of eternal life “Denn wir haben hie keine bleibende Statt, sondern die zukünftige suchen wir.” With the V-ii motion in mm. 1-2, and the weak tonics in mm. 3 and 5, Brahms creates a sense of tonal ambiguity, which will be reconciled as the victory in the afterlife approaches in the second half of the movement. Brahms suggests C major again in 8-11, but this sounds like V of F minor by the downbeat of m. 12. We shall see that the process through which Brahms works out the role of  $D\flat$  and restores natural  $\sharp^2$  is the same process he uses to transform C minor into C major in m. 204. The ultimate arrival of C major follows the transformation of V/V in mm. 184-186 and into  $ii^7$  in m. 201.

The text “Siehe, ich sage euch ein Geheimnis” stands out due to its brief transitional function in the introduction.  $\flat II$  becomes V of  $F\sharp$  minor in mm. 28-34 and instantly shifts the tonal center a tritone away from the opening key. Example 7.2 shows how Brahms creates forward momentum in preparation for the baritone solo entry in m. 28. Irregular phrase lengths (from m. 3: 5+2+8+11 measures per phrase), the continuous quarter note motion in the bass in mm. 3-28 (briefly interrupted in mm. 16-17). This is of particular interest in relation to the “Tod,” “Hölle,” and “Kraft” chords mentioned above, which present a full ensemble moment of rhythmic stasis several times in mm. 178-180, 184-186, 289-290, and 315-316. This example also shows the wide-ranging bass line, reaching its high point on  $A\flat^3$  in m. 5 and its low point on  $D^1$  in m. 27. Mm. 16-17 repeat the G to D motion of mm. 1-2, while the point of imitation in m. 18 matches m. 3. Brahms follows the altos with the sopranos in m. 20 who ascend to  $E\flat^5$  before settling on  $E\flat^4$  register in m. 26. Here the altos recover the melody as they move into the baritone register in m. 28 handing off the melody on  $G^3$ , as the soloist begins to reveal the mystery of the eternal afterlife: “Siehe, ich sage euch ein Geheimnis.” The small scale relationship between the

homophonic texture of mm. 3-16 and the imitative presentation of the same theme in m. 18-28 is prophetic of the way in which Brahms will reveal the mystery across the entire movement. He will turn to a large-scale fugue at the movement's end in the same way that he introduces imitation in preparation for the revealed mystery.

The image displays a musical score for Brahms' *Ein deutsches Requiem*, VI, mm. 1-28. The score is written for Soprano, Alto, Tenor, Bass, and Piano. The tempo is marked *Andante*. The key signature is B-flat major (two flats). The time signature is common time (C). The score is divided into two systems. The first system covers measures 1-14, and the second system covers measures 15-28. Handwritten annotations include "5 measures" above the first system, "2 measures" below the second system, and "8 measures →" below the third system. The lyrics are in German and English. The piano part is marked *sotto voce* and *pp*. The vocal parts are marked *p* and *pp*. The score is annotated with "Bass Ab3" and "8" in the piano part.

**System 1 (mm. 1-14):**

*Andante*  
Soprano  
Denn wir haben hier keine bleibende Statt,  
Here on earth we have no secure place of rest,  
Alto  
Denn wir haben hier keine bleibende Statt,  
Here on earth we have no secure place of rest,  
Tenor  
Denn wir haben hier keine bleibende Statt,  
Here on earth we have no secure place of rest,  
Bass  
Denn wir haben hier keine bleibende Statt,  
Here on earth we have no secure place of rest,  
Piano  
*sotto voce*  
*pp*

**System 2 (mm. 15-28):**

Soprano  
sondern die zukünftige suchen  
therefore, we seek one to come, seek one  
Alto  
sondern die zukünftige suchen  
therefore, we seek one to come, seek one  
Tenor  
sondern die zukünftige suchen  
therefore, we seek one to come, seek one  
Bass  
sondern die zukünftige suchen wir, suchen  
therefore, we seek one to come, seek one, seek one  
Piano  
*pp*

Handwritten annotations: "5 measures" above the first system, "2 measures" below the second system, and "8 measures →" below the third system.

Example 7.2. Brahms, *Ein deutsches Requiem*, VI, mm. 1-28, choir and baritone solo.

(a) mm. 1-14, choir and accompaniment.

- chen wir,  
 to come,  
 - chen wir,  
 to come,  
 - chen wir,  
 to come,  
 - chen wir,  
 to come,

denn wir ha-ben hie kei-ne, kei-ne blei-ben-de  
 here on earth we have no place, no se-cure place of

denn wir ha-ben hie kei-  
 here on earth we have no

15

← 8 measures      11 measures →

*Point of Imitation*

Baritone Solo

A

Sie, he, ich  
 Lis-ten, and

E $\flat$ 5

p

dimin.

E $\flat$ 4

Shared G $\flat$ 3

denn wir ha-ben hie kei-ne blei-ben-de Statt.  
 here on earth we have no se-cure place of rest.

dimin.

Statt, wir ha-ben hie kei-ne blei-ben-de Statt, kei-ne blei-ben-de Statt.  
 place on earth we have no se-cure place of rest, no se-cure place of rest.

dimin.

ne, kei-ne blei-ben-de, kei-ne blei-ben-de Statt.  
 place, no se-cure place, have no se-cure place of rest.

p

dimin.

denn wir ha-ben hie kei-ne blei-ben-de, blei-ben-de Statt.  
 here on earth we have no se-cure, no se-cure place of rest.

22

A

Bass

p

← 11 measures

(b) mm. 15-28, choir and baritone solo.

Brahms reveals the mystery of  $\flat^{\wedge}2$  in mm. 28-40 in a moment of effective word painting involving the word “Geheimnis.” Example 7.3 shows how in mm. 28-33, the solo line ascends to  $D\flat^4$ , where Brahms transforms (“verwandelt”) it into  $C\sharp^4$ . The first mystery is the tritone motion from G in m. 28 to the  $D\flat/C\sharp$  cadence in m. 32. The second and deeper mystery is the harmonic relation. The soloist’s  $D\flat$ , which was  $\flat^{\wedge}2$  in C, is now  $\wedge^5$  of  $F\sharp$ ; the tonic instantly shifts a tritone away (the point of furthest remove) from the home key of C minor. This musical transformation accompanies the text “wir werden nicht alle entschlafen, wir werden aber alle verwandelt werden.” Note the persistence of diminished thirds in the bass in mm. 36-37, 38, 42-43, 50-51 as an emblem for sleep and then transfiguration. If we think of  $C\sharp$  as a “verwandelt”  $D\flat$ , it is corrected in m. 70. In mm. 68-72, the top voice climbs from  $C\sharp$  through D to  $E\flat$ . A similar ascent occurs in mm. 152-156, where Brahms repeats the word “Tod.”

The image shows a musical score for a baritone solo in Brahms' *Ein deutsches Requiem*, VI, measures 28-49. The score is written in C minor (three flats) and common time. It consists of two systems of staves. The top staff is the baritone solo, and the bottom two staves are piano and chorus. The lyrics are: "Ge - heim - nis" (mm. 28-32), "schlafen" (mm. 36-38), "schlafen" (mm. 42-44), and "verwandelt" (mm. 50-52). The score includes various musical notations such as notes, rests, and dynamic markings like "pno." and "d3".

Example 7.3. Brahms, *Ein deutsches Requiem*, VI, mm. 28-49, baritone solo.



Example 7.4 shows the first occurrence of this  $\flat^{\wedge}2 - \sharp^{\wedge}2 - \wedge^3$  motive in mm. 68-72. In mm. 32-71, Brahms transforms  $D\flat$  into  $C\sharp$ . In m. 68,  $C\sharp$  initiates the transition back to C minor in m. 72.  $C\sharp$  along with the  $D\sharp$  in m. 66 facilitates this transition. When the sopranos'  $E\flat^5$  returns in m. 72, it echoes the last  $D\sharp^4$  in the solo from m. 66, a pitch that Brahms ensured would stand out by following it with three beats of silence; indeed, the many rhetorically pregnant rests in the part of the soloist in this movement recall those in Op. 121 No. 3, and the rhythmic irregularities from the very beginning of this movement. In mm. 68-73, the solo part initiates the  $C\sharp - D - E\flat$  ascent, which the sopranos, altos, tenors, flutes, oboes and trombones complete across three octaves.

Example 7.4. Brahms, *Ein deutsches Requiem*, VI, mm. 62-82, F# minor – C minor.

This shared ascent carries with it the optimism of the sound of “der letzten Posaune.” This vivid image, along with the seven-measure stand on the dominant in mm. 75-81, sets up the minor-to-major mixture in the following *Vivace* section beginning in m. 82.



In mm. 82-104, the new *vivace* tempo accompanies the text that prophesizes “Denn es wird die Posaune schallen, und die Toten werden auferstehen unverweslich, und wir werden verwandelt werden.” These measures embody the hope and faith of Brahms’s *Requiem*. On the mortal side of death, peering into the eternal afterlife, Brahms is optimistic. He introduces  $E\sharp_1$ , soon to be  $\sharp^3$ , in m. 85 – on the word “schallen” – as the leading tone to iv (F minor). C major appears as V of F minor repeatedly in these measures, as late as m. 99. This local tonicization function is subordinate to the larger-scale role of  $E\sharp_1$  in this passage as forecast of the ultimate “correction” of minor, and of mortal apprehensions about death, by major. Example 7.5 shows how Brahms treats the word “Toten” (“death”) the first utterance of this word in the entire work.

c: i iv<sup>add6</sup> ? i V V<sup>7</sup> /iv<sup>4</sup> ? ? e: i iv<sup>add6</sup>

Example 7.5. Brahms, *Ein deutsches Requiem*, VI, mm. 82-89, chorus.

If the premise of the present study is correct and the minor system in this work represents mortal trials and tribulations, while the parallel major system represents acceptance of the blessings of life and death, Brahms has shown us that death is not something to be mourned, but something to heralded by the last trumpet. How he accomplishes this with mixture shown in mm. 85-89. As shown in Example 6.5,  $\sharp^3$  accompanies the sound of the trumpet in m. 85-87 and “die Toten” in m. 88 – the first occurrence in the *Requiem* of this word. Brahms adds  $\sharp^6$  in m. 87 and sets in

motion this C minor-major transformation into its eternal, natural, major form. From mm. 82-207, he builds musical tension in a battle between systems that makes tangible “the cosmic struggle between the primeval foes – death and life.”<sup>38</sup>

Example 7.6 shows how Brahms uses melodic direction to further his struggle between major and minor in mm. 82-104. This passage prophesizes the ultimate transfiguration of human suffering.

Example 7.6. Brahms, *Ein deutsches Requiem*, VI, mm. 82-104, middleground mixture.

Though mm. 82-108 initiate the *vivace* tempo in a new triple meter, the staccato bass of mm. 1-27 returns varied.  $\sharp^3$ , introduced in mm. 85-87, becomes the tonic of E minor; likewise  $\sharp^7$  is emphasized in mm. 91-94 as local V. This E minor passage accompanies the text “und die Toten werden auferstehen unverweslich.” The tempo, change of meter, the text, the motion to C major, and the transformation of  $\sharp^3$  into a local tonic all signal the approaching climax of the entire work. Hints of C minor do returns in mm. 98-104. It is still too early for the resurrection as the text prophesizes “und wir werden verwandelt werden.” The C major chords are still a projection of salvation rather than salvation itself.

<sup>38</sup>Paul S. Minear, *Death Set to Music* (Atlanta, GA, John Knox Press, 1987), 77.

When the chorus enters stating the word of God in m. 127, the movement begins its dramatic rise to the definitive climax of this work. Beginning in m. 127, the declamatory melody of m. 82 is transfigured; from here on, glorious, soaring choral melodies rush into the *Requiem* in waves. The chorus plays the role of mortals who, thoroughly prepared for a fearsome battle with death, stare in a state of utter disbelief at the Heavenly spoils of “Sieg” that await them in the B dominant seventh of mm. 137-139 and the C dominant sevenths in mm. 140-142 and 143-145. However, these chords still do not quite represent the ultimate union of all the orchestral and choral forces at Brahms’s disposal.

The “Kraft” chords shown in Example 7.7 represent a further intensification. Through registral saturation, the full ensemble chords in mm. 178-207 carry the victory of death and hell to the fugue in m. 208. All members of the choir and orchestra join forces to face “Tod” and “Hölle” together. They achieve this union partially on the basis of the text that brings this moment about – “Der Tod ist verschlungen in den Sieg” – and partially on the basis of another dramatic correction of  $\flat^{\wedge}3$  by  $\sharp^{\wedge}3$  in m. 178. In these chords, we see saturation of all registers and therefore the resolution of the registral opposition that has been occurring throughout the work. Only when all instruments and voices in all registers are united can register truly embody the resolution to the struggle between mortal life and death. Progressing through the words “Tod,” “Hölle,” “wo,” and “Sieg,” these chords present the gradual acceptance of death culminating in the victory of mm. 204-207. The *Tod* chord of mm. 178-180, a  $V^7/IV$  that includes raised- $^{\wedge}3$ , leads to the  $V^7/V$  *Hölle* chord of mm. 184-186. The three chords that support the word “wo” in mm. 192, 194, and 196-199 progress through  $iv$ ,  $\flat II_6$  and finally (via the passing seventh of mm. 196-200 and the  $ii_7 - V$  of mm. 201-203) to an authentic cadence on C major in m. 204.

WINDS & TIMP.

S. A.

T. B.

STR. & ORG.

"Tod" "Stachel" "Hölle" "Wo" "Sieg?" "Sieg?"

178 179 183 184 186 192 194 196 201 204 207

$V_2^4 /iv$   $V_2^4 /V$   $iv$   $>II^6$   $P 7_2$   $ii^7$   $I$

Example 7.7. Brahms, *Ein deutsches Requiem*, VI, mm. 178-207, full ensemble chords.

Brahms's emphasis on the contrapuntal  $E^7$  in 197-200, plus the rest in m. 200, helps set off the  $ii^7$ -V formula of mm. 201-203 from what comes before it; the latter formula reverses and corrects the initial fragmentary, decontextualized V-ii of the opening of the movement. The repeated "wo" seeks resolution:  $A\flat$  (mm. 192-193) becomes  $G\sharp$  (mm. 196-200) and thus finds resolution in  $A\sharp$  in m. 201. Here,  $ii^7$  attains the status of structural pre-dominant to C major. The *tutti* C major chord set to the word "Sieg" in mm. 204-207 affirms the C major "correction" which has been brewing since the second measure.

Thus, Brahms ascends into the final and definitive fugue in this *Requiem*. The fugue texture is the horizontal version of the registral saturation that we see in the “Tod,” “Hölle,” and the upcoming “Kraft” chords. The altos enter with the subject in m. 208. Example 6.8 shows how the soprano real answer in m. 212 expands the fugue’s registral scope by moving outward from the C<sup>5</sup> of the altos’ first subject in m. 208 to the soprano G<sup>5</sup> in m. 212; the tenors and basses entries expand the registral coverage further to C<sup>4</sup> and G<sup>4</sup> (mm. 216 and 220), and eventually to the basses’ C<sup>3</sup> in m. 224. Rather than each successive entry displacing the one before it, the overall effect is that of registral saturation. The sopranos ascend to A<sup>5</sup> in m. 215, as they did in m. 183; this will be their highest pitch in the movement. As much as this movement is about a large-scale shift from minor to major, it is also about the saturation of registers. The baritone solo and the opening soprano melody in their respective C<sup>3</sup> and C<sup>4</sup> registers give way to repeated ascents to A<sup>5</sup> as the chorus sings: “Herr, du bist würdig zu nehmen Preis und Ehre und Kraft” as they answer their own taunting question “Hölle, wo ist dein Sieg!” from the first half of the movement. Victory is found in the praise, honor, and power of the Lord. While the altos and sopranos share this subject to ascend from the alto C<sup>5</sup> entry to the soprano A<sup>5</sup> highpoint in m. 215, the basses eventually descend to C<sup>3</sup> in m. 224. Minor system elements return throughout the final fugal passage merely as recollections of mortality.

Example 7.8 shows how  $\flat^7$  enters first in m. 228 of the soprano line followed by the basses in m. 229. The harmonic context of G minor here accounts for the presence of B $\flat$ . In m. 232, the soprano melody features first low then high  $\wedge^3$  over the D pedal. This interaction recalls the *Schmerz und Seufzen* chromatic motive from movement two. Each of these moments (when understood in relation to the *Kraft* chords and the silence of m. 66) represents a moment of recollection, a moment to savor the present, or a moment of preparation for the future.

Handwritten musical score for Brahms' *Ein deutsches Requiem*, VI, mm. 208-224, fugal exposition. The score is divided into three systems, each with a key signature change indicated above the staves.

**System 1 (mm. 208-213):** Key signature changes from C<sup>5</sup> to G<sup>5</sup>. The first staff (Soprano) begins with a circled G<sup>5</sup> note, labeled "Answer". The second staff (Alto) begins with a circled G<sup>5</sup> note, labeled "Subject". The lyrics are: "Herr, du bist wür - dig zu nehmen Preis und Eh - re und Kraft, ' denn du hast al - le -".

**System 2 (mm. 214-220):** Key signature changes from A<sup>5</sup> to C<sup>4</sup>. The first staff (Soprano) continues the "Counter Subject" with the lyrics: "nehmen Preis und Eh - re und Kraft, denn du hast al - le - Din - ge er - schaf -". The second staff (Alto) continues the "Subject" with the lyrics: "Din - ge er - schaf - fen, und durch dei - nen Willen ha - ben sie das We - sen und sind ge - schaf -". The third staff (Bass) begins with a circled G<sup>4</sup> note, labeled "Subject", with the lyrics: "Herr, du bist wür - dig zu nehmen Preis und Eh - re und".

**System 3 (mm. 220-224):** Key signature changes from G<sup>4</sup> to C<sup>3</sup>. The first staff (Soprano) continues the "Counter Subject" with the lyrics: "fen, und durch dei - nen Willen ha - ben sie das We - sen und sind ge - schaf - fen, fen, und sind ge - schaf - fen, ge - schaf - fen, Herr, du bist". The second staff (Alto) continues the "Subject" with the lyrics: "Herr, du bist wür - dig zu nehmen Preis und Eh - re und Kraft, Kraft, denn du hast al - le - Din - ge er - schaf - fen, und durch dei - nen". The third staff (Bass) continues the "Subject" with the lyrics: "Herr, du bist wür - dig zu nehmen Preis und Eh - re und Kraft, Kraft, denn du hast al - le - Din - ge er - schaf - fen, und durch dei - nen".

Example 7.8. Brahms, *Ein deutsches Requiem*, VI, mm. 208-224, fugal exposition.

Example 7.9. Brahms, *Ein deutsches Requiem*, VI, mm. 226-235, mixture.

Following the double fugal exposition and cadence of mm. 208-234, the episode that begins in m. 235 recalls the C minor collection, which is once more corrected by the point of imitation starting in m. 243.

Example 7.10 shows how lowered scale degrees, corrected each time to their natural form, continue to arise in the creation of the two definitive falling-fifths progressions (occurring in mm. 282-289 and 304-315), which also feature the characteristic registral saturation of this *Requiem*. In mm. 282-290, Brahms ascends from a double bass C<sup>2</sup>, through the chorus to the sopranos' A<sup>5</sup> by way of an overpowering circle-of-fifths progression. The bass rises in 282-285, then makes a compensatory descent to F<sup>#</sup> in 289; the chorus begins its ascending imitative entries in 284 and completes them in m. 289 as well. The flutes and oboes join this ensemble-wide rush in m. 286. In mm. 304-307, Brahms employs stretto in a similar ascent, though the fifth relationships are not diatonic as in the previous passage.



Example 7.10. Brahms, *Ein deutsches Requiem*, VI, mm. 304-316, fifth progressions.

This stretto point of imitation in the chorus uses the perfect fifth sequence (C – F – B $\flat$  – E $\flat$  – A $\flat$ ). This manipulation of the falling fifth sequence – utterly simple by design – enables Brahms to feature each of the lowered scale degrees  $\wedge 3$ ,  $\wedge 6$ , and  $\wedge 7$  of the C major-minor collection (B $\flat$  – E $\flat$  – A $\flat$ ). These ascents through three octave registers in mm. 282-290 and 308-316 return to the C major collection in a rush to the word “Kraft.” The transformation into eternal afterlife is indeed upon us; the power of the entire ensemble, all registers, the major system, and the shift into fugal procedure embody this definitive, eternal victory of life in death.



## CHAPTER 8

### BLESSED ARE THE DEAD

Brahms's *Requiem* begins and ends with the Lord's blessing and the happiness that comes with that blessing. Movements one and seven begin and end in F major, and the textual focal point of both is their shared opening phrase "Selig sind." As we have seen throughout this study, Brahms consistently associates the major system with the victory of the afterlife in death. Mixture in the first and last movements of the *Requiem* associates minor with the profound mourning that accompanies monumental mortal love.

The text for movement seven comes from Revelations, the Bible's final book. It is a text, which more than any other in the *Requiem* represent the ideal of a blessed afterlife that rewards a mortal life of travail. Figure 8.1 provides text and translation.

Selig sind die Toten,  
die in dem Herren sterben, von nun an.  
Ja, der Geist spricht, daß sie  
ruhen von ihrer Arbeit;  
denn ihre Werke folgen ihnen nach.

Blest are the dead who,  
from now on, die in the Lord.  
"Yes," says the Spirit, "in that they  
may rest from their labor,  
for their works follow after them."  
Revelation 14:13

Figure 8.1. Brahms, *Ein deutsches Requiem*, VII, text and translation.

Brahms begins the first movement with a Beatitude, and the last movement with an echo of the Beatitudes from the Revelation of John. The word "selig" is a German translation of *makarioi*, the word that Jesus uses in his Sermon on the Mount in the Greek original. *Makarioi* has been translated as "happy" in the sense of "fortunate" and "blessed."<sup>39</sup> But what is the difference between the happiness that begins Brahms's *Requiem* and the happiness at its end? The happiness that opens the work comes from the promise (yet to be realized) of eternal

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<sup>39</sup>T. A. Robertson, *Word Pictures in the New Testament*,  
[http://www.ccel.org/r/robertson\\_at/wordpictures/htm/MT5.RWP.html](http://www.ccel.org/r/robertson_at/wordpictures/htm/MT5.RWP.html), accessed March 10, 2007.

salvation, while the happiness that opens and closes its final movement comes with the realized promise of that salvation. One is happy or “selig” (spiritually blessed, and aware of that fact) when one dies in the Lord.

Movement seven is in ternary form, which Brahms uses to articulate the meaning of the two sentences in the text; the second sentence elaborates upon the pronounced blessing of the first.

Table 8.1. Brahms, *Ein deutsches Requiem*, VII, form, keys, and contrasting texts.

A	Link	B	A'	Coda
mm. 1-39	mm. 40-47	mm. 48-101	mm. 102-126	mm. 127-end
Selig sind die Toten...	Ja, der Geist	spricht	Selig sind die Toten...	
I – V	V – V/III	III – V/III	I	

As a result of the movement’s tonal organization, the text “Selig sind die Toten, die in dem Herren sterben, von nun an” is associated with the global tonic of the Requiem (F major). The link and B section of movement seven set the text that promise rewards for earthly labor: “Ja, der Geist spricht, daß sie ruhen von ihrer Arbeit; denn ihre Werke folgen ihnen nach.” The time spent in III# is an intensification of  $\wedge^3$ , the movement’s (and the work’s) *Kopft*on.

Example 8.1 compares the openings of the two movements. Movements one and seven both begin with a tonic F pedal and both introduce mixture with  $E\flat^3$  ( $\flat\wedge^7$ ) in m. 2. In movement one, lowered- $\wedge^3$ ,  $\wedge^6$  and  $\wedge^7$  all appear by m. 6. In movement seven, lowered- $\wedge^7$  stands as the lone mixture pitch in m. 2 of the cello part and it is quickly corrected by an ascending  $E\flat$  to  $E\sharp$  motion in m. 3 of the first violin part. Here, Brahms clarifies the function of mixture and register within his work. Blessing mortals who mourn in movement one, all three mixture pitches enter in the low register to represent the pain of earthly suffering. Blessing the dead who die in the Lord in

movement seven, one mixture pitch stands alone and is replaced by its upwardly tending major system counterpart.

**Ziemlich langsam und mit Ausdruck**

2 Flöten

2 Oboen

2 Fagotte

2 Hörner in F

3 Posaunen

Harfe  
wenigstens  
doppelt besetzt)

Sopran

Alt

Tenor

Baß

Bratschen

2. Violoncell

3. Violoncell

Kontrabaß

Orgel (ad lib.)

Pedal

**Ziemlich langsam und mit Ausdruck**

Example 8.1. Brahms, *Ein deutsches Requiem*, I and VII, openings.

(a) I, mm. 1-17.

**Feierlich**

2 Flöten

2 Oboen

2 Klarinetten in B

2 Fagotte

Kontrafagott (ad lib.)

2 Hörner in F

2 Hörner in E

3 Posaunen

Harfe

Sopran

Alt

Tenor

Baß

1. Violine

2. Violine

Bratsche

Violoncell

Kontrabaß

Orgel (ad lib.)

**Feierlich**

*Se - - - - - lig - sind die To - - - - - ten, die in dem Her - ren ster -*

*E<sub>b</sub> - E<sub>h</sub>*

*A<sup>6</sup>*

*div.*

*Ped.*

(b) VII, mm. 1-10.

Movements one and seven also differ in their opening performance indications. While movement one is to be performed “Ziemlich langsam und mit Ausdruck” (rather slowly and with expression), the indication in movement seven reads simply “Feierlich” (solemnly). How does a performer treat the latter of these indications? How does one perform with an appropriate degree of solemnity, taking into consideration the music and text that has brought us to this point in the *Requiem*, and what has yet to be resolved? One of the first indicators is the difference in dynamic levels between the first and last movements. While the first movement begins *pianissimo*, the seventh movement (following on the heels of the powerful full ensemble chords in movement six) begins *forte*. Brahms’s use of register also provides important clues. He foregrounds the registral contrast between the opening movement (which blesses those who mourn) and the final movement (which blesses the dead) by adding violins to the latter. The strings arpeggiate upward from A<sup>2</sup> to A<sup>5</sup> in mm. 1-5 and the first violins (absent in movement one) begin their second phrase on A<sup>6</sup> in m. 6. Moreover, the choir does not enter until m. 15 in movement one where the sopranos begin on F<sup>4</sup>, while the sopranos enter on F<sup>5</sup> in m. 2 of movement seven (a large-scale registral coupling). This latter entry sets up a point of imitation answered by the basses in m. 10; whereas in previous movements an imitative texture is an eventual goal, in the final movement it is a point of departure. Imitation, representing an ideal state of harmony with the divine, is only briefly attained in movement one, at the climaxes, and only attained with difficulty in movements two, three and six, but is arrived at effortlessly here. In both movements, the initial tonic is transformed into V<sup>7</sup> of IV almost immediately, though the resulting use of lowered scale degrees differs greatly. Both movements are also characterized by a pyramiding build-up from low to high registers.

The soprano and bass entries in mm. 2 and 10 respectively highlight the role of register in movement seven. Example 8.2 summarizes registral voice-leading activity in mm. 1-18.

Example 8.2. Brahms, *Ein deutsches Requiem*, VII, mm. 1-18, register and mixture.

It also shows how exchange between soprano and bass results in a register transfer and transposition of the melodic line and its accompaniment. The basses are the first to introduce mixture into the choir parts. In m. 15, the basses ascend for an instant to  $E\flat^4$  (lowered- $\wedge^3$  in C major) as they sing the word “sterben” on a melisma. Brahms counterpoises  $E\flat$  and  $F\sharp$  throughout mm. 14-15. In the second half of m. 15, these pitches resolve to D and G respectively, heightening the level of dissonance here with a fully diminished seventh sonority. The basses finish their solo on the text “von nun an,” while the first violins descend an octave from  $G^5$  to  $G^4$ , thus ending a phrase that reinforces the solemnity of the end to mortal life. This movement features undulating registral motion such as the  $A^2$  to  $A^5$  in mm. 1-5. Not all of these traversals fill in an octave or a multiple octave (see mm. 6-10). Some do not move entirely in one direction, as is the case in mm. 10-12. Since the violin line in mm. 16-18 is not structural, it does not generate a coupling; the structural line is the  $C^4 - G^3$  fourth progression in the basses’ line

(mm. 14-18). Westafer tracks initial, highest, and final melodic tones across the seven movements.<sup>40</sup> With respect to registral saturation, this dissertation focuses on gestures that traverse several octaves in movements one, six, and seven; these are the traversals that represent significant philosophical moments in Brahms's exploration of the cosmic struggle between life and death. The imitative process itself (present at the very beginning of movement seven) contrasts the soprano and bass before all four choral parts join together at m. 18. We shall see later in this chapter how Brahms recapitulates a five-octave ascent in the harp to provide this work's ultimate optimistic portrayal of the victory of the Lord's blessings in life and in the afterlife.

When the word "Toten" recurs in m. 19, Brahms recalls the diminished seventh sonority from m. 15 in another fifth-progression in mm. 19-26, this time through  $\flat^{\flat}7$  and  $\flat^{\flat}6$ . In m. 19, Brahms builds a diminished seventh between  $F\sharp$  and  $E\flat$  (Example 8.3).

Example 8.3. Brahms, *Ein deutsches Requiem*, VII, mm. 18-34, register and mixture.

<sup>40</sup> Westafer, "Over-all Unity and Contrast in Brahms's *Ein deutsches Requiem*," 270.

While this second bass F<sup>#</sup> resolves to G in mm. 20, Brahms follows the soprano E<sub>b</sub> in m. 19 with a rest. E<sub>b</sub> has a larger purpose in this passage. Brahms follows the bass E<sub>b</sub> in m. 23 with an E<sub>b</sub> correction in m. 24 where the diminished seventh between bass E natural<sup>3</sup> and the soprano D<sub>b</sub><sup>5</sup> calls for melodic motion to F and C respectively. Brahms uses the same “Selig sind die Toten” text as the opening imitative passage to highlight the contrast of the opening imitation with the homophony of mm. 18-34. Thus, the central blessing of movement seven brings together with other aspects of the work’s dialectic the textural dialectic between imitation and homophony.

The basses enter on C<sup>4</sup> in m. 10 and gradually descend to C<sup>3</sup> in m. 36, while the sopranos return to C<sup>5</sup> in m. 26 and descend from there to C<sup>4</sup> in m. 34. The opening point of imitation in mm. 1-17 sets basses against sopranos and extends the opposition between high and low registers beyond the opening orchestral ascent. Example 8.3 also shows how the choral phrase in mm. 18-34 takes the sopranos up to G<sup>5</sup> (their second highest pitch in the movement) before they fall a full octave and a half to C<sup>4</sup>. They reach this pitch on the word “Selig.” The choral descent from G<sup>5</sup> in m. 20 to C<sup>4</sup> in m. 34 represents the soprano’s first structural descent into the obligatory register. (We shall see that the closing soprano pitch in movement seven is F<sup>4</sup>.)

The altos (now in control of the melodic line) never venture above C<sup>5</sup> in mm. 18-34 and they emerge in m. 40-42 to affirm the upper voice descent to C<sup>4</sup> in m. 34. In mm. 40-42, Brahms removes the sopranos from the texture, leaving the lower three voices singing a striking octave-doubled statement on the text “Ja der Geist spricht” accompanied by only horns and trombones. Recall movement one, where A major is weakly enunciated as the antithesis of D<sub>b</sub> major. Here the arrival of A minor is much more salient. The earlier F<sup>#</sup> fully diminished seventh (native to the



minor system), is replaced here with the half diminished seventh on F#, the equivalent harmony from the parallel major mode.

Example 8.4. Brahms, *Ein deutsches Requiem*, VII, mm. 40-42.

In these measures, Brahms establishes a melodic relationship between sopranos and altos that he continues through the end of the movement. The altos lead as the Holy Spirit assures that those who die in the Lord shall rest from their labors. The near juxtaposition of C major (m. 39) and B major (m. 42) is a reversal of the “Sieg” chord motion in mm. 137-144 of movement six. Here, in mm. 40-48 the voices have a recitative that links the new theme of m. 48 to the previous section. This new theme is first heard in woodwinds and horn. A further link between sections lies in the fact that the chorus first repeats the “dass sie ruhen” text, before it continues, with the “denn ihre Werke” text beginning in m. 47-48. Thus, Brahms bridges the harmonic interruption in 34-39.

The B section begins in m. 48 and sets the last line of the movement's text "denn ihre Werke folgen ihnen nach" in mm. 54 and following it features a significant reversal of function for this movement's mixture pitches through enharmonic equivalence. Example 8.5 shows how the key of A major provides Brahms with the enharmonic equivalents for A $\flat$  (lowered- $\wedge^3$ ) and D $\flat$  (lowered- $\wedge^6$ ) by way of G $\sharp$  and C $\sharp$  respectively; a further move to E major provides D $\sharp$ , the equivalent for E $\flat$  ( $\flat^7$ ), and recalls the B major to C major relationship in the previous movement.

Example 8.5. Brahms, *Ein deutsches Requiem*, VII, mm. 48-76, E major tonicization.

D $\sharp$ s arrive first in mm. 52-53 on the text "ruhen von ihrer Arbeit" as Brahms approaches his first E major cadence in m. 54. E major remains in force through cadences in mm. 60, 70, and 74. Brahms uses D $\sharp$  in a deceptive cadence on a modally mixed iv6 of E in mm. 69-70. The altos' A $^3$  hangs on here until Brahms corrects this cadence with a perfect authentic cadence in E major in mm. 73-74, where the altos arrive on G $\sharp$ ; the low strings' arrival on E completes the cadential motion and dovetails this passage into the next. Both moments feature the text "folgen ihnen nach." Brahms re-introduces A $\flat$ , D $\flat$ , and E $\flat$  in mm. 83-86. Introduced in the voice parts on the text "daß sie ruhen" and followed quickly in the winds, these mixture pitches recall the labor from which the dead now rest. Though the key signature is still three sharps, the use of three F mixture pitches suggests that a return to the global F tonic is not far off. In this very sparse

moment set in the high tessitura of the ensemble, one sees melodic ascents through lowered versions of  $\wedge 6$  and  $\wedge 7$  in the voice parts countered by descents in the winds.

[illegible]

Example 8.6. Brahms, *Ein deutsches Requiem*, VII, mm. 83-88, mixture.

The sopranos and altos come to rest in m. 88, gradually joined by lower voices in the choir and orchestra. Brahms returns to the home key of F major in m. 102, using a deceptive cadence similar to the one in mm. 63-64; here F major is modally mixed VI of A major.

The A' section (mm. 102-127) reveals how Brahms continues to saturate all registers in his resolution of the battle between life and death. He signals the return to the main theme with a double bass descent to E<sup>2</sup> in mm. 92 and 100-101, which ultimately resolves up to F<sup>2</sup> in mm. 101-102. The music from mm. 18-34 returns in mm. 111-127, transposed to the tonic and replacing the imitative entries of mm. 10-17. In the recapitulation Brahms replaces the Holy Spirit's affirmation with new music and the movement's opening text "Selig sind die Toten, die in dem Herren sterben, von nun an." Example 8.7 shows how the sopranos enter in m. 111 a step higher than their m. 18 entry and thus move closer to tonic in m. 111.

Example 8.7. Brahms, *Ein deutsches Requiem*, VII, mm. 111-127, mixture and structural descent.

While the double basses and organ work their ways towards F<sup>1</sup> in m. 127, the sopranos and altos share the movement's structural melodic descent. The sopranos carry the beginning of the melodic fifth progression (C<sup>5</sup>, Bb<sup>4</sup>, A<sup>4</sup>) in mm. 111-123 before skipping up to a covering C<sup>5</sup> in m.

125. The alto's G<sup>4</sup> (^2) is implicitly present in mm. 125-126, and the altos complete the descent to F<sup>4</sup> (^1) in m. 127 with the text "sterben, von nun an." With the recapitulation complete, Brahms prepares to resolve the musical and philosophical issues at play through all seven *Requiem* movements. This coda (beginning in m. 127) recalls the link in mm. 34-39 and serves as the coda not just for the seventh movement, but also for the entire work.

When Brahms features the text "Selig sind" once again in mm. 132-138, he nearly recreates the motive that accompanies those words in movement one in m. 132 of the flute part. In m. 137 a very similar motive skips up by third and then moves by step (see soprano voice, movement one, mm. 15-17). In m. 132, Brahms initiates a passage whose goal is E $\flat$  major ( $\flat$ VII) and highlights one of the key modal reversals involved in the intensification of a mixture pitch into a harmonic scale step—i.e.,  $\flat^{\wedge}7$  (E $\flat$ ) becomes  $\flat$ VII (E $\flat$  major). The "Selig sind" motive from movement one appears again in mm. 143-144 of movement seven in a very brief tonicization of D $\flat$  major ( $\flat$ VI) and thus Brahms uses each of  $\flat$ III,  $\flat$ VI, and  $\flat$ VII in mm. 137-145 and completes his reference to major sonorities built on  $\flat^{\wedge}3$ ,  $\flat^{\wedge}6$ , and  $\flat^{\wedge}7$ .

As the coda from movement one returns slightly varied in m. 147 of movement seven the new context of the final movement brings the work's registral dialectic into focus. The violins take on some of the high woodwind movement one material (compare oboes, bassoons, and horns in movement one mm. 144-158 to the first and second violins in movement seven mm. 152-166). More importantly, there is a significant difference between the way that Brahms sets the words "Selig sind" in mm. 152-154 of movement seven versus his "getröstet werden" in mm. 144-146 of movement one. The final movement setting is characterized by an ascending imitative pyramid through all four choral voices (bass, tenor, alto, soprano)—a musical emblem for scaling a mountain peak and surmounting earthly difficulties. In mm. 152-154 of movement

seven, Brahms replaces movement one's promise of comfort with the realization of the Lord's blessing. This alters the context for the restatement of the remaining music. High and low registers unite in a vast 5-octave ascending major-third harp gesture in mm. 154-157 of movement one and mm. 162-166 of movement seven. Because mortal existence is consumed by the arrival of a vast eternal joy that, paradoxically, has always been, the promise of movement one and the blessing of movement seven receive the same music.

The other key aspects of the dialectic in Brahms's *Requiem* is the opposition between its fugal and not-fugal textures, high and low scale degrees, and high and low registers. The unifying process at work throughout this *Requiem* is that of following and displacing. Each of the fugal textures in movements two, three, and six represents a transition to the afterlife; they each follow and displace another texture (homophonic, monophonic and/or imitative) with mundane connotations. These movements are also marked by large-scale shifts from minor to major systems. Recall the *Schmerz and Seufzen* motive in the major half of movement two. In the second half of movement two, mixture recalls the pain and suffering in the movement's first half, though major has followed and displaced minor. In movement seven, the process of following and displacing continues as lowered mixture pitches are followed and displaced by their diatonic counterparts. The battle between registers has already been previewed in the five-octave ascent at the end of movement one and the victorious *Kraft* chords of movement six. This victory is confirmed in the high woodwinds and harp at the end of movement seven. Example 8.8 shows how Brahms approaches the virtually identical music at the ends of movements one and seven.

10

ge-trö-stet wer - den,  
shall find great com - fort,  
ge - trö - stet wer.  
shall find great com -  
ge - trö - stet  
shall find great  
sie sol -  
they shall -

136 dolce cresc. f dim.

F iv ii V7

sie solln ge - trö-stet wer - den, ge - trö-stet wer -  
they then shall find great com - fort, shall find great com -  
- den, ge - trö-stet wer - den,  
- fort, shall find great com - fort,  
wer - den, ge - trö-stet wer - den, ge - trö-stet wer - den, ge -  
com - fort, shall find great com - fort, shall find great com - fort, shall  
- len ge - trö-stet wer - den,  
- find, shall find great com - fort,

142 p cresc. p

vii<sup>o7</sup>/V V7 I

Example 8.8. Brahms, *Ein deutsches Requiem*, I and VII, approaches to Coda.

(a) I, mm. 136-147.



142

se - lig sind, se - lig sind,  
blest are they, blest are they,

se - lig sind, se - lig sind, se - lig  
blest are they, blest are they, blest are

se - lig sind, se - lig sind,  
blest are they, blest are they,

se - lig sind,  
blest are they,

*p espress.*

sind die To - - ten, se -  
they that per - ish, blest

die in dem Herrn ster - ben, se - lig  
who trust the Lord at death, blest are

se - lig sind,  
blest are they,

148

ii<sup>7</sup> V<sup>7</sup> I

(b) mm. 142-153.



The sopranos initiate a point of near imitation in m. 140 of movement one. Staggered entries quickly descend through the basses, who join the orchestral dominant pedal. In mm. 140-143, the chorus seeks comfort over a prolonged dominant before the tenors initiate the closing point of imitation (shown with an arrow) in m. 143. In movement seven, Brahms features lowered-VI in his blessing of the dead in mm. 143-145. The altos and tenors approach the final point of imitation, this time initiated by the basses (shown with an arrow) in m. 151. In this final blessing, all four voices join in an ascending gesture that sets up the closing harp ascent.

While Brahms ends movement one with the promise of comfort (“getröstet werden”), he ends movement seven with the joyful blessing of that comfort realized (“Selig sind”). In the closing three measures of both movements, the harp joins the flutes and chorus in their A – F ( $\Delta^3$  –  $\Delta^1$ ) closing gesture, which is the retrograde of the “Selig” motive heard in mm. 15-16 of movement one. A and F, which between them signify an arrival in the governing tonality (F) and the governing mode (major), also figure in the key plan of movement seven. Voices and instruments united in song from the corners of Heaven and earth echo this definitive, major system gesture. This gesture, along with the philosophical, registral, textural, and modal progressions at work throughout this *Requiem* reveals undeniable hierarchical relationships in the music of Brahms. With regard to register, Brahms repeatedly ascends great spans into the victory of the afterlife. His textural representations of this victory typically involve the echoing choruses of imitative counterpoint. Finally, the eternal joy of God’s blessing realized consistently arrives with structural shifts from minor to major. Brahms’s 1868 *Requiem* not only defines the components of a nineteenth-century Germanic musical dialectic, but also embodies its resolution in the realized blessings of the Lord.

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