

Honeck: Mozart's Last Concerto and Brahms's Requiem

Sunday, January 25, 2026 · 19:00 · Barbican
Manfred Honeck, conductor · Imogen Cooper, piano · Chen Reiss, soprano · Gerald Finley, bass-baritone · London Symphony Chorus, choir

TONIGHT'S PROGRAMME		MIN
1	MOZART 1756–1791 <i>Piano Concerto No. 27 in B-flat major, K. 595</i>	30'
2	BRAHMS 1833–1897 <i>A German Requiem, Op. 45</i>	68'
TOTAL MUSIC		98'

Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart

1756–1791

Piano Concerto No. 27 in B-flat major, K. 595

30 minutes

WHAT TO LISTEN FOR

Listen for the concerto's gentle, conversational intimacy: Mozart writes for a modest orchestra and treats the piano not as a heroic protagonist but as a first among equals, the music passing tenderly between soloist and ensemble. The first movement is graceful and songful, but listen for the shadows: unexpected chromatic turns and slips into the minor that cloud its serenity with wistfulness.

The slow movement (Larghetto) is one of Mozart's most sublimely simple, a hymn-like melody of disarming purity, almost childlike in its directness, profoundly moving in its restraint. Then the finale: a lilting 6/8 rondo on the 'Longing for Spring' tune, outwardly cheerful and dancing, but with the same vein of gentle melancholy running beneath. Listen for how Imogen Cooper, a celebrated Mozartian, shapes these long, singing lines and brings out the music's tender, valedictory poetry.

Johannes Brahms

1833–1897

A German Requiem, Op. 45

WHAT TO LISTEN FOR

Listen for the work's overarching journey from grief to comfort, and for the way Brahms frames it: the first and last movements both begin with the word 'Selig' ('Blessed'), and the very opening music returns, transformed, at the close, so the whole work comes full circle in peace.

Key moments to follow: the gentle, dark-hued opening chorus ('Blessed are they that mourn'); the slow, tremendous funeral march of the second movement ('For all flesh is as grass'), which builds to a blazing affirmation of resurrection; the great fugues that crown the third and sixth movements, written with Brahms's matchless contrapuntal mastery; the radiant fourth movement ('How lovely are thy dwellings'); and the two solos: the baritone (here bass-baritone Gerald Finley) meditating on human mortality in the third and sixth movements, and the soprano (Chen Reiss) bringing the work's tenderest consolation in the fifth. Listen, above all, to the chorus, which carries the heart of this deeply humane meditation on loss and comfort.



CONCERT PROGRAMS

<https://concertprograms.eu/concerts/Iso-2026-01-25-honeck>

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