

Brahms's *Ein deutsches Requiem* in Context (2016-17)

Sample Paper

Answer three questions.

- 1 According to Malcolm MacDonald, Brahms's *Ein deutsches Requiem* 'is "German" in no nationalistic sense but because it is rooted in the language of the Lutheran Bible'. Discuss.
- 2 'History has viewed [Brahms] as agnostic, but the reality is much more complex; his ambivalence toward [*sic*] organized religion appeared to have hindered the prophetic role he might otherwise have played in this area of composition.' (CHESTER L. ALWES) Discuss.
- 3 **Either (a)** Carl Dahlhaus once argued that in music 'past and present form an indissoluble alloy'. Discuss with reference to the music of Brahms, examining in detail at least **two** works.
Or (b) Explore the nature of Brahms's debt to any **one** of the following composers: Mozart, Cherubini, Schubert.
- 4 To what extent is an understanding of the genesis of *Ein deutsches Requiem* essential to an understanding of the work itself?
- 5 **Either (a)** Write a detailed study of any **one** movement of *Ein deutsches Requiem*, approaching it from as many angles as possible.
Or (b) Daniel Beller-McKenna once claimed that 'the *Requiem*'s cohesion probably owes more to a general symmetry in its overall musical form than to some hidden or pervasive motivic unity'. Discuss.
- 6 What can one glean from Brahms's *oeuvre* about his attitude to human mortality?