

Brahms Requiem

Saturday, April 22, 2017 • 7:30 p.m.

First Free Methodist Church

Orchestra Seattle
Seattle Chamber Singers
Clinton Smith, conductor



WOLFGANG AMADÈ MOZART (1756–1791)

Ave verum corpus, K. 618

Ave verum corpus,
natum de Maria virgine,
vere passum, immolatum,
in cruce pro homine,
cujus latus perforatum
unda fluxit et sanguine:
esto nobis praegustatum
in mortis examine.

Hail, true body,
born of the Virgin Mary,
who has truly suffered and was sacrificed
on the cross for humankind.
Whose side, being pierced,
flowed with water and blood:
may you be for us a foretaste
in the trial of death.

FRÉDÉRIC CHOPIN (1810–1849)

Piano Concerto No. 2 in F minor, Op. 21

Maestoso
Larghetto
Allegro vivace

Stephen Binondo, piano

— intermission —

JOHANNES BRAHMS (1833–1897)

Ein deutsches Requiem, Op. 45

Selig sind, die da Leid tragen
Denn alles Fleisch es ist wie Gras
Herr, lehre doch mich
Wie lieblich sind deine Wohnungen
Ihr habt nun Traurigkeit
Denn wir haben hie keine bleibende Statt
Selig sind die Toten

Rebecca Nathanson, soprano

José Rubio, baritone

Please silence cell phones and other electronics, and refrain from the use of cameras and recording devices during the performance.

Special thanks to First Free Methodist Church for all of their assistance in making OSSCS's 47th season possible, and for providing refreshments during intermission. Donations left at the refreshments tables help support FFMC and its programs.

Ein deutsches Requiem

Selig sind, die da Leid tragen,
denn sie sollen getröstet werden.

Die mit Tränen säen,
werden mit Freuden ernten.
Sie gehen hin und weinen
und tragen edlen Samen,
und kommen mit Freuden
und bringen ihre Garben.

Denn alles Fleisch es ist wie Gras
und alle Herrlichkeit des Menschen
wie des Grases Blumen.
Das Gras ist verdorret
und die Blume abgefallen.

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

Denn alles Fleisch es ist wie Gras
und alle Herrlichkeit des Menschen
wie des Grases Blumen.
Das Gras ist verdorret
und die Blume abgefallen.
Aber des Herrn Wort bleibt in Ewigkeit.

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.

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, wes soll ich mich trösten?
Ich hoffe auf dich.

Der Gerechten Seelen sind
in Gottes Hand,
und keine Qual rühret sie an.

A German Requiem

Blessed are they who mourn,
for they shall be comforted.
— Matthew 5:4

They who sow in tears
shall reap in joy.
They go forth and weep,
and carry precious seed,
and come again with joy,
and bring their sheaves with them.
— Psalm 126:5–6

For all flesh is as grass,
and all the glory of man
is like the flower of the field.
The grass withers and the flower falls.
— I Peter 1:24

So be patient, dear brothers,
until the coming of the Lord.
See how the farmer waits
for the precious fruit of the earth,
and is patient for it,
until he receives the spring rains
and the autumn rains.
— James 5:7

For all flesh is as grass,
and all the glory of man
is like the flower of the field.
The grass withers
and the flower falls.
But the word of the Lord endures forever.
— I Peter 1:24–25

The redeemed of the Lord
shall return
and come to Zion with rejoicing;
everlasting joy shall be upon their heads;
they shall obtain joy and gladness,
and pain and suffering shall fly away.
— Isaiah 35:10

Lord, let me know
that I must have an end,
that my life has a term,
and that I must pass on.
See, my days are
as a hands breadth before you,
and my life is as nothing before you.
Truly, all men who still walk the earth
are hardly as anything.
They go hence like a shadow
and all their noise comes to nothing.
They heap up their wealth but do not know
who will inherit it.
Now, Lord, how shall I find comfort?
I hope in you.
— Psalm 39:4–7

The souls of the righteous are
in the hands of God,
and no torment shall touch them.
— Wisdom of Solomon 3:1

Wie lieblich sind deine Wohnungen,
Herr Zebaoth!
Meine Seele verlangt und sehnet sich
nach den Vorhöfen des Herrn;
mein Leib und Seele freuen sich
in dem lebendigen Gott.
Wohl denen, die in deinem Hause wohnen;
die loben dich immerdar.

Ihr habt nun Traurigkeit;
aber ich will euch wieder sehen
und euer Herz soll sich freuen,
und eure Freude soll niemand
von euch nehmen.

Ich will euch trösten,
wie einen seine Mutter tröstet.

Sehet mich an: ich habe eine kleine Zeit
Mühe und Arbeit gehabt
und habe großen Trost funden.

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.

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.

How lovely are your dwellings,
Lord of Sabaoth!
My soul longs and faints
for the courts of the Lord;
my body and soul rejoice
in the living God.
Blessed are they who dwell in your house;
they praise you evermore.
— Psalm 84:1–2, 4

You now have sorrow;
but I will see you again
and your heart shall rejoice,
and your joy no man shall
take from you.
— John 16:22

I will comfort you
as one whom a mother comforts.
— Isaiah 66:13

Look on me: for a short time
I have had sorrow and labor,
and have found great comfort.
— Ecclesiasticus 51:35

For here we have no abiding city,
but we seek one to come.
— Hebrews 13:14

Behold, I tell you a mystery:
We shall not all sleep,
but we shall all be changed,
and that quickly,
in a moment,
at the last trumpet:
For the trumpet shall sound,
and the dead shall be raised
incorruptible,
and we shall be changed.
Then shall be fulfilled the word
that is written:

Death is swallowed up in victory.
Death, where is your sting?
Hell, where is your victory?
— I Corinthians 15:51–52, 54–55

Lord, you are worthy
to receive praise and glory and power,
for you have created all things,
and by your will were they created
and have their being.
— Revelation 4:11

Blessed are the dead
who die in the Lord, from now on.
Yes, says the Spirit,
that they rest from their labors,
and their works follow after them.
— Revelation 14:13

Soprano

Barb Anderson
Ann Bridges
Sue Cobb
Abigail Owens Cooper
Kyla DeRemer
Cinda Freece
Peggy Kurtz §
Kathleen Sankey
Nancy Shasteen

Alto

Sharon Agnew
Julia Akoury-Thiel
Cheryl Blackburn
Jane Blackwell
Deanna Fryhle
Rose Fujinaka
Ellen Kaisse
Jan Kinney
Lorelette Knowles
Theodora Letz
Lila Woodruff May
Laurie Medill §
Cathrine Morrison
Valeria Riedemann
Annie Thompson
Brittany Walker

Tenor

Alex Chun
Ralph Cobb
Jon Lange §
German Mendoza Jr.
Tom Nesbitt
Jerry Sams
David Zapolsky

Bass

Timothy Braun
Andrew Danilchik
Douglas Durasoff
Daniel Hericks
Stephen Keeler
Dennis Moore
Byron Olivier
Glenn Ramsdell
Steven Tachell
Skip Viau
Richard Wyckoff §

Violin

Dean Drescher
Alexander Hawker
Stephen Hegg
Jason Hershey
Manchung Ho
Fritz Klein*
Pam Kummert
Gregor Nitsche
Susan Ovens
Stephen Provine**
Davis Reed
Elizabeth Robertson
Theo Schaad
Lily Shababi
Janet Showalter
Kenna Smith-Shangrow

Viola

Deborah Daoust
Lauren Daugherty
Karen Frankenfeld
Lauren Lamont
Katherine McWilliams
Karoline Vass
Sam Williams*

Cello

Marshall Brown
Peter Ellis
Karen Helseth
Max Lieblich
Patricia Lyon
Katie Sauter Messick
Annie Roberts
Valerie Ross
Matthew Wyatt*

Bass

Michaela Credo
Ericka Kendall
Kevin McCarthy
Chris Simison*

Flute

Virginia Knight
Shari Muller-Ho*

Piccolo

Melissa Underhill

Oboe

Yuh-Pey Lin
Rebecca Rice*

Clarinet

Steven Noffsinger*
Chris Peterson

Bassoon

Aaron Chang
Jeff Eldridge*

Contrabassoon

Michel Jolivet

French Horn

Barney Blough
Laurie Heidt*
Jim Hendrickson
Carey LaMothe

Trumpet

Rabi Lahiri
Janet Young*

Trombone

Cuauhtemoc Escobedo*
Chad Kirby
Jim Hattori

Tuba

David Brewer

Timpani

Dan Oie

Harp

Bethany Man

** *concertmaster*

* *principal*

§ *section leader*

About the Piano Soloist

Fifteen-year-old pianist **Stephen Binondo**, gold medalist in the Chopin Foundation of the Northwest's 2017 Festival concerto division, is a student of Judy Baker. Stephen has garnered many honors in piano including first place at the SCMTA concerto competition, second place in the Sonatina-Sonata Festival, first place in the Anna Rollins Johnson Scholarship competition and first place in the Performance Arts Festival of the Eastside concerto competition. Stephen was the silver medalist at the 2016 Chopin Festival concerto competition and gold medalist at the 2015 Chopin Festival solo competition. In addition to his musical pursuits, Stephen enjoys crabbing and fishing, and playing with his pet dogs, Max and Harley.

Program Notes

Wolfgang Amadè Mozart

Ave verum corpus, K. 618

Joannes Chrisostomus Wolfgang Gottlieb Mozart was born in Salzburg on January 27, 1756, and died in Vienna on December 5, 1791; he began calling himself Wolfgang Amadeo around 1770 and Wolfgang Amadè in 1777. He composed this motet for chorus and strings at Baden bei Wien, Austria, on June 16 and 17, 1791. It likely had its first performance the following Sunday at St. Stephen's, the local parish church.

Numerous composers have set to music the brief Latin Eucharistic poem *Ave verum corpus* ("Hail, true body"), which dates from the 1300s. It sets forth the Roman Catholic belief in the "real presence" of Jesus in the bread and wine of the Eucharist and the identification of our own suffering and death with Jesus' passion, and is often sung during the liturgy of Benediction of the Blessed Sacrament, when Christ's presence in consecrated bread, displayed in a decorated open or transparent receptacle, is acknowledged and adored by the congregation.

The autograph of Mozart's tranquil, intimate setting of the *Ave verum corpus* text is dated June 17, 1791, a week before the celebration of the Feast of Corpus Christi ("the Body of Christ"), which commemorates the Last Supper that Jesus shared with his friends and family on the night before his crucifixion. Mozart, occupied at this time with his opera *The Magic Flute*, was visiting his wife Constanze, who was expecting their sixth child and enjoying the famous hot springs at Baden about 16 miles south of Vienna.

For his friend Anton Stoll, the master of music at Baden's 13th-century parish church, Mozart wrote his moving, 46-measure motet on a piece of paper he is said to have found in the small garden pavilion of the house at 4 Rengasse, in which his wife and young son Karl had taken rooms. Six months later, sadly, Mozart was dead. This masterly miniature, one of Mozart's best known and most popular pieces, might thus be experienced by listeners today as a farewell and also as both a love song and a lullaby: for the composer's wife and coming child, and for Jesus, whose suffering and death bring consolation and life.

— Lorelette Knowles

Frédéric Chopin

Piano Concerto No. 2 in F minor, Op. 21

Chopin was born March 1, 1810, in Żelazowa (near Warsaw) and died October 17, 1849, in Paris. He began composing this work in 1829 and was the soloist at its premiere on March 17, 1830, in Warsaw. The accompaniment calls for pairs of woodwinds, horns and trumpets, bass trombone, timpani and strings.

Fryderyk Franciszek Chopin, the Polish-born son of a French father and Polish mother, began playing piano in public at age seven, by which time he had already composed two polonaises (improvised at the keyboard and notated by his teacher). Seemingly destined for the life of the traveling virtuoso, an 1829 trip to Vienna brought him great acclaim. Upon returning to Warsaw, he began work on the first of his two piano concertos (his only works involving orchestra, aside from a *Grand polonaise brillante* of 1834).

Chopin premiered his F-minor concerto (known as "No. 2" due to its delayed publication) in March 1830 at the first public concert of his own music in Warsaw. "The first *Allegro* of my concerto — unintelligible to most — received the reward of a 'bravo' from a few," Chopin reported to a friend. "But the [second and third movements] produced a very great effect. After these, the applause and the 'bravos' seemed really to come from the heart." The young pianist-composer was suddenly a national hero. After his E-minor concerto received a less enthusiastic response, Chopin relocated to Paris (where he would spend the rest of his life), changing his name to Frédéric François and giving a limited number of public concerts, preferring to display his brilliant improvisational talents in private settings.

The F-minor concerto opens with a customary orchestral introduction laying out some of the first movement's principal themes, one of which suggests the rhythms of the mazurka, a triple-meter Polish folk dance with "strong accents unsystematically placed on the second or third beat" (according to *The Harvard Dictionary of Music*). When the soloist begins to play, the orchestra largely recedes into the background: unlike Beethoven, whose piano concertos (the last composed around the time of Chopin's birth) pitted piano against orchestra in a dynamic dialogue, Chopin has the keyboard offer up an eloquent soliloquy.

At the heart of the concerto lies a poetic slow movement inspired by the composer's love for a soprano, Konstancja Gładkowska, who attended the Warsaw Conservatory with young Chopin. "I already have my perfect one whom I have, without saying a word, served faithfully for a year now, of whom I dream, in whose memory the [*Larghetto*] of my concerto has been put up." The love affair was decidedly one-sided: while Gładkowska knew of Chopin and admired his music, she only learned of his infatuation with her decades later from a biography of the composer.

The rondo finale returns to the $\frac{3}{4}$ meter of the concerto's opening, as well as the rhythms of the mazurka (and another Polish dance, the kujawiak), to conclude a concerto that Franz Liszt called a work "of ideal perfection, its expression now radiant with light, now full of tender pathos."

— Jeff Eldridge

Johannes Brahms *Ein deutsches Requiem*, Op. 45

Brahms was born in Hamburg on May 7, 1833, and died in Vienna on April 3, 1897. He may have been sketching new ideas for his German Requiem as early as 1861 (eventually reusing material composed as early as 1855), but Brahms produced the bulk of the composition between February and October of 1866. The first three movements premiered in Vienna during December 1867, and Brahms had added another three by a concert on Good Friday 1868 at Bremen Cathedral. He then composed the fifth movement, first heard at a private concert in Zürich on September 12, 1868. The full seven-movement work had its first performance in Leipzig on February 18, 1869, with Carl Reinecke leading the Gewandhaus Orchestra. In addition to soprano and baritone soloists and four-part chorus, the work calls for pairs of woodwinds (plus piccolo and contrabassoon), 4 horns, 2 trumpets, 3 trombones, tuba, timpani, harp and strings.

As a student of music history, the generally agnostic Brahms knew Latin Requiem masses of earlier composers, but he found Lutheran liturgies in the German language more congenial. The idea for the *German Requiem*, the work that first won Brahms musical fame throughout Europe, seems to have been quite clear in his mind by April 1865, when the composer mentioned it in letters to Clara Schumann. Brahms had been thinking about composing such a work for some time, and he had drafted sections of the opening movements as early as 1861. He appears by 1865 to have settled on the basic structure of the piece, and to have selected the individual texts.

Brahms began the composition of the *Requiem* in earnest during February 1866. The four movements of an earlier Bach-style cantata for solo baritone, chorus and orchestra eventually became movements 1, 2, 3 and 7 of the *Requiem*, and by August of that year the bulk of the piece (all but the eventual fifth movement) was complete. Brahms revised the work over the next several months, discussing the changes with some of his correspondents, including violinist Joseph Joachim and Clara Schumann, to whom he presented the vocal score on December 30, 1866. The first three movements debuted in Vienna on December 1, 1867, while a concert in Bremen on Good Friday 1868 included three more. Brahms then revised these six movements and completed what became the fifth movement during May 1868. The *Requiem* received its first complete performance at Leipzig in February 1869.

What impelled the relatively young Brahms to compose a work dealing with the subject of death? His motives appear to have been complex. Brahms' musical moods often tended to be dark: Joseph Hellmesberger, who as longtime concertmaster of the Vienna Philharmonic was able to observe the composer closely, commented: "When Brahms is in extra good spirits, he sings 'The grave is my joy.'" Brahms wrote his *Requiem* without having received a commission, and with no clear prospects for a performance. Its composition probably arose, therefore, not out of a desire for profit, but out of Brahms' need to express his own thoughts and feelings about mortality.

Serious labor on the piece likely began as a result of the death of Brahms' mother in 1865. Brahms did mention that his work was spurred on by her memory, and the textual excerpts from Martin Luther's German translations of the Old Testament, the New Testament and the Apocrypha that he chose to set refer to a motherly consolation of the bereaved. Brahms had also been deeply affected by the 1856 death of Robert Schumann, his friend and benefactor, and had considered composing some sort of musical memorial to him. (The *Requiem's* second movement had its genesis as a rejected slow movement from Brahms' first piano concerto, composed shortly after Schumann's death.) As Brahms scholar Michael Musgrave has concluded, "it seems unlikely that there was only one personal influence on the *Requiem*"; the deaths of his mother and of Schumann were for Brahms "a stimulus to the completion of existing ideas, rather than the source of them."

Brahms insisted that his *Requiem* was intended for all humanity: in 1867, he would say about the title of his work, "I will admit that I could happily omit the 'German' and simply say 'human.'" Its themes of melancholy, acceptance of death, and comfort to the living apply to many occasions. It appears that Brahms chose his texts according to personal preference and cultural identity rather than religious conviction. He spoke of the Bible as "not a dogmatic interpretation of religious commandments, but a cultural and emotional repository of views and values." He avoided in his *Requiem* any specific reference to Jesus Christ or God's salvation, focusing instead on the very human emotions elicited by the death of a loved one. The *Requiem*, like many other vocal works of Brahms, deals with the fleeting nature of life, the need for solace following loss, the hope of a final attainment of peace, and a reward for struggle. It is not intended to be a mass for the dead, but instead is offered as a comfort and consolation for the living.

The Vienna debut of the *Requiem's* first three movements was not exactly a resounding success. A percussionist misinterpreted Brahms' printed dynamics, playing the repeated D's in the third movement's mighty fugal section so loudly that he drowned out the rest of the ensemble. Jeers and catcalls sounded in the audience, while reviewers proved equally vociferous. Critic Eduard Hanslick, after commenting that he "felt like a passenger rattling through a tunnel in an express train," nevertheless wrote:

"The *German Requiem* is a work of unusual significance and great mastery. It seems to us one of the ripest fruits to have emerged from the style of the late Beethoven in the field of sacred music. Since the masses for the dead and mourning cantatas of our classical composers the shadow of death and the seriousness of loss have scarcely been presented in music with such power. The harmonic and contrapuntal art which Brahms learnt in the school of Bach is inspired by him with the living breath of the present."

The subdued "baritone" instruments of the orchestra begin the first movement of the *Requiem* with music that creeps almost imperceptibly out of the void. Chorus enters alone and initially alternates with orchestra as Brahms

weaves a blanket of comfort in the key of F major around texts taken from St. Matthew's account of the Sermon on the Mount and from Psalm 126.

The B \flat -minor second movement deals with death's inevitability, counsels patience and concludes in hope. It opens with a triple-meter "funeral march" (or, perhaps more properly, a "dance of death") for full orchestra with a pulsing timpani at its heart. The chorus sings the chorale "All flesh is like grass" four times, with increasing insistence. At the movement's end, however, a jubilant B \flat -major passage assures the Lord's redeemed of eternal joy.

Brahms paints the opening of the third movement with a D-minor brush in dark, stony colors, as a solo baritone and chorus discuss the frailty of humanity, the futility of life, and the fear of death. In response to this dialogue, the composer builds a great four-part choral fugue in the strong key of D major upon the solid foundation of a persistent low D sustained for 36 measures. The fugue's comforting text comes from the *Wisdom of Solomon*: "But the souls of the righteous are in the hand of God and no torment shall touch them."

The beloved chorus that follows, with a text from Psalm 84, forms the pivotal core of the *Requiem*. In contrast to the drama of the preceding fugue, this lyrical E \flat -major movement simply shimmers. A fughetta marked by shifting rhythmic accents appears near the end.

A solo soprano appears only in the fifth movement, which presents the central ideas of the *Requiem*'s final three movements: the redeeming power of faith and the promise of eternal life. At the 1868 Bremen performance (prior to this movement's composition), soprano Amelie Joachim (wife of Joseph) sang "I know that my redeemer liveth" from Handel's *Messiah*, perhaps suggesting to Brahms that a similar aria had a place in his own work. The composer might have had his mother in mind when he selected the text from Isaiah, which repeats over and over: "I will comfort you, as one whom his own mother comforts."

The sixth movement is the *Requiem*'s most dramatic, featuring the baritone's flamboyant oration and the triumphant "last trumpet" heralding the death of Death. (Luther's Bible uses the word *posaune* — trombone — rather than the more familiar trumpet, and Brahms therefore allows the trombone section a moment of glory.) A masterful fugue follows, perhaps exceeding in magnificence the fugue of the third movement.

The *German Requiem*'s finale brings the work full circle as the opening key of F major returns. Both outer move-

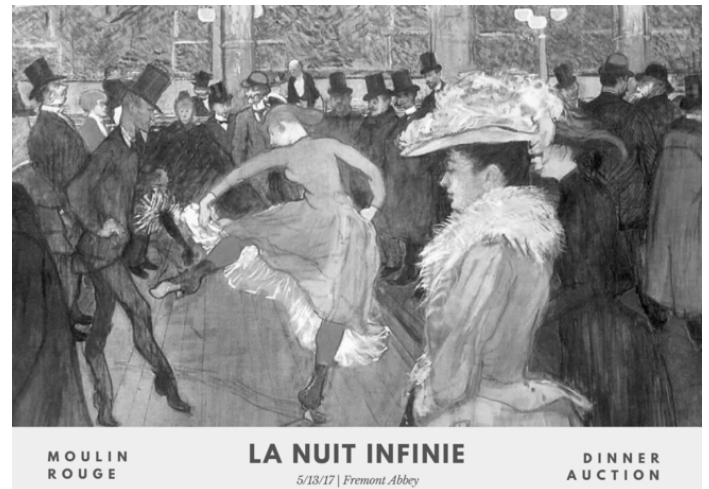
ments also pronounce benedictions: the first upon those who mourn the dead, the last upon the dead themselves. In the closing measures, sopranos soar to a high A before the harp (an instrument rarely heard in Brahms' orchestral music) follows them heavenward and the chorus whispers a final beatitude.

After Brahms gave Clara Schumann the *German Requiem*'s score, she wrote to him: "I am completely filled with your *Requiem*. It is an immense piece that takes hold of one's whole being like very little else. The profound seriousness, combined with all the magic and poetry, has a wonderful, deeply moving and soothing effect." Brahms thus fulfilled Robert Schumann's 1853 prophecy, made when the two composers first met: "When he lowers his magic baton before the combined forces of chorus and orchestra, they will give him strength to reveal even more marvelous insights into the secrets of the spiritual world."

— Lorelette Knowles

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