

STOKOWSKI GIVES THE BRAHMS REQUIEM

Initial Performance of Great Work Shows Orchestra Chorus to Excellent Advantage

The first of three performances of the Brahms Requiem, in as many days, was given at the Academy of Music last evening by the Philadelphia Orchestra, chorus and orchestra. The work is not one to achieve a great popular success under any circumstances, nor did it do so last evening, but that this was the case does not in any manner reflect upon the very creditable performance of an enormously difficult and involved composition, both by the orchestra, and especially by the chorus.

The Requiem is written for two solo voices, soprano and baritone, but by far the major portion of the work is choral. It is in seven parts in all of which the chorus participates. The solo parts were taken by Florence Hinkle and Ronald Werrenrath. Miss Hinkle sang beautifully in the only vocal solo number allotted to the soprano, the fifth part, "Ye Now Are Sorrowful," her voice rising high and pure in the beautiful single melody of the composition. The baritone part is almost altogether in the nature of a recitative and was splendidly sung by Mr. Werrenrath, with great clarity and conviction. Both Mr. and Miss Hinkle maintained throughout the highly devotional atmosphere of the Requiem.

The chorus as a whole did splendid work. The balance is not quite all that might be desired as the high and difficult tenor section could stand a few more voices to advantage. The tonal quality of the chorus is very good, but there was a certain lack of assurance in places, which suggested that the chorus was perhaps new to the work. The details of the Requiem, but which doubtless, the nervousness incidental to the first public performance with orchestra had much to do with.

Mr. Stokowski again gave a wonderful exhibition of memory by conducting the Requiem without a score, and it is a work requiring constant attention to the many intricacies of the vocal parts. The finest part of the whole Requiem is the sixth section, beginning with a baritone solo and leading into the superb choral "For the Trumpet Shall Sound and the Dead Shall Be Raised," and it was here that the chorus did its best work both in tonal quality and in spirit. The mighty vocal chorus which closes this section and the exquisite closing number "Blessed Are the Dead

Which Die in the Lord," were also beautifully sung. The orchestration of the Requiem is characteristically that of the Brahms of the early period, for it was composed at a time when Brahms' orchestral style was not yet clearly formed, being among the very earliest of his works employing the orchestra. It precludes the first of the symphonies by twenty-three compositions and shows the influences which led to the two serenades, one of which was written without violins.

While the work as a whole must be placed in the very first rank of compositions for voice and orchestra, it is one which requires a very great amount of religious fervor on the part of both conductor and chorus to make it really effective. There are places in which the sublime is reached and throughout there is a dignity at times approaching majesty which has not been achieved in many compositions.

There is nothing of degradation in the Requiem, and it shows little if anything of the devotional mysticism which is so strong a characteristic of Bach in the B minor Mass and the St. Matthew Passion. Yet the Brahms Requiem is the legitimate successor of these two mighty pieces, of Protestant church music. The selections of the text were the composer's own, and they are not such as would commend themselves to the average composer of religious music, no matter how talented.

The music, like the words, deals in

spirit with the mysteries of human destinies. That the subject was a favorite one with Brahms is shown by the fact that he returned to it in the "Four Serious Songs," his last work. But it is not pessimistic. Of all composers, Brahms (together with Beethoven and Bach) was the one least likely to court a transient popularity by making a "happy ending" to a serious work like the Requiem. But like the last chorus of the St. John Passion of Bach, there is a confident tranquillity in the close of the Requiem which dispels the questioning, but not the pessimism of the earlier numbers. The Requiem throughout is serious, but never sorrowful.

The conductor, as well as the members of the chorus and the orchestra are to be congratulated upon the excellent reading of the great work which was given last evening. It will be presented today at the regular Friday afternoon concert and again at Saturday evening's performance. Tuesday the chorus will go to New York with the orchestra, where the Requiem will be sung.

Pope Asks K. C. to Aid Italy
New York, March 4.—Pope Benedict has asked the Knights of Columbus to organize community welfare work throughout Italy, that organization announced yesterday.

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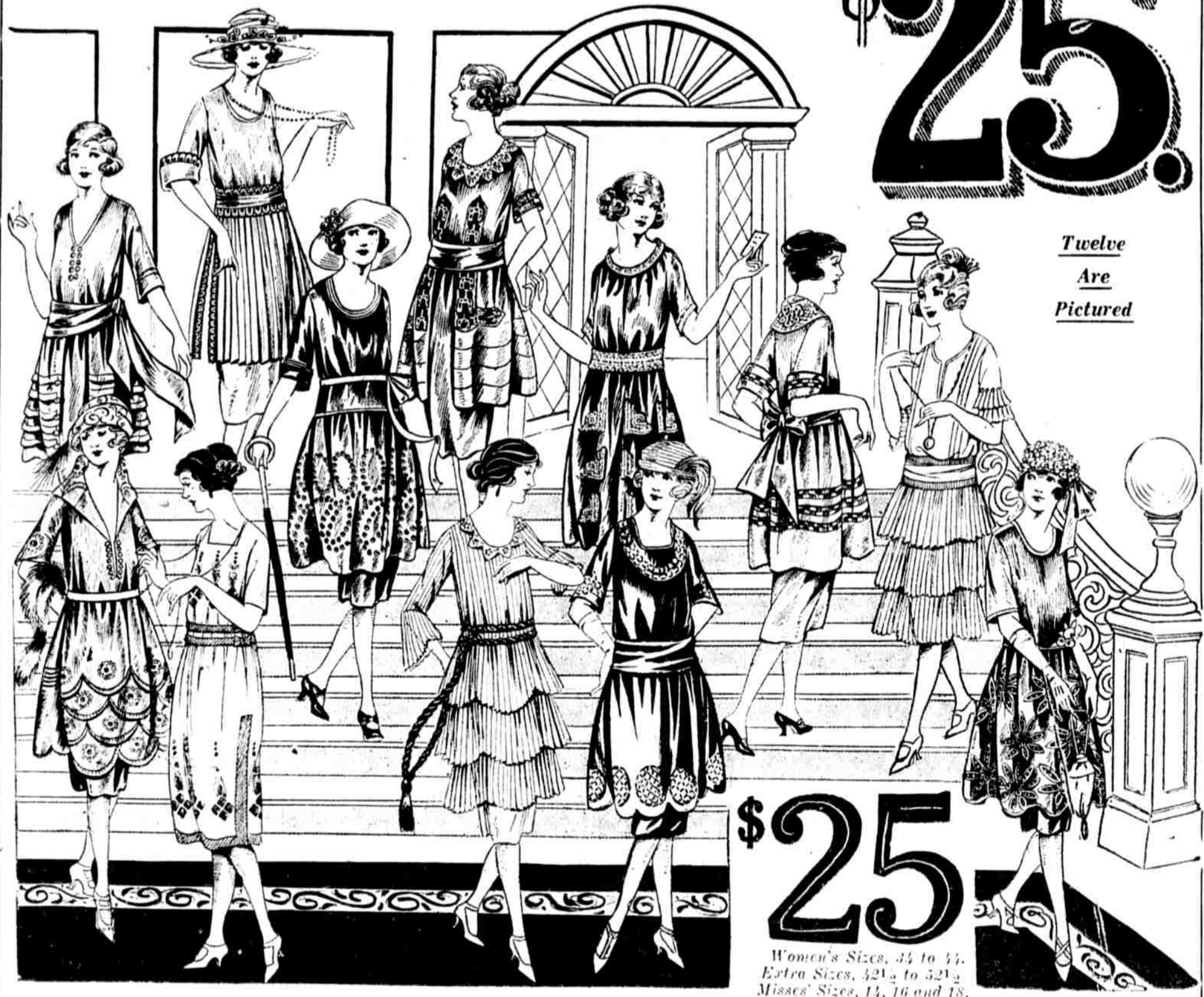
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