

# NEW HAVEN REGISTER

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## ENTERTAINMENT

### Yale Glee Club repeats concert they performed in Spain



The Yale Glee Club performed the Brahms "Requiem" in the Paraninfo of the University of Barcelona recently. T. Sean Maher

By [Joe Amarante](#), *New Haven Register*

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NEW HAVEN >> [Yale Glee Club](#)'s first trip to Spain in more than 50 years early this month "was fantastic," says maestro Jeffrey Douma. "We had a great time. We gave concerts in Barcelona and Madrid and in two smaller towns."

And now Yalies and locals can share in the experience just a little bit when the choral group and the Yale Symphony Orchestra perform the same program of Brahms' German "Requiem" at 8 p.m. Saturday in Woolsey Hall.

"It's a great thing, actually," says Douma, "because often when you perform these large choral-orchestral works, you rehearse for a long time and only get to perform it once. So I was really happy that the students had an opportunity to perform it once in Spain and again here on campus."

The glee club is nearly all undergraduate, with 40 men and 40 women comprising Yale's oldest musical organization, dating to 1861 (third-oldest in country).

Douma, who teaches conducting and filled in for the then-ailing conductor of the New Haven Symphony Orchestra in two Handel's "Messiah" concerts in December, said the glee club's annual travel serves to extend students' horizons internationally, "but also, we take very seriously our role as ambassadors for the university, and I think music is a great way to share something about who we are as a school and what we do. I think Yale is known as a singing university and has been for many, many decades."

There are a cappella groups, the Whiffenpoofs, Yale Schola Cantorum and Yale Opera and Yale Choral Artists, a professional group that Douma also directs.

"There's something about singing that connects in an immediate and strong way with an audience," Douma said.

Neeta Helms, president of the company that arranges the trips, Classical Movements, says in an email, "the Spanish were very excited to have such a prestigious group performing in their country, and that certainly shined through in the glee club's full houses and press coverage throughout the tour."

Douma also noted the warm response in Spain. Which brings us to Saturday's program.

The Yale Symphony "really performs at the highest level," says Douma, and for years he's wanted to collaborate on the Brahms "Ein Deutsches Requiem." He calls it "one of the finest works in the choral orchestral repertoire of the last several hundred years. It's just a phenomenal piece, incredibly beautiful, incredibly well-crafted, incredibly emotional."

"Requiem" was Brahms' "first large-scale, multimovement work of his to reach a large audience," solidifying his reputation as a great composer, says Douma.

Brahms chose different passages of liturgical text "that are concerned not only with death but ... with comfort and compassion for those who mourn ... those left behind."

The German word for joy, "freude," is found over and over in the piece, says Douma, in addition to elegiac and dramatic strains.

"But I would say that ... anybody hearing the piece would definitely not come away from it thinking that they heard a sad piece about death," says Douma. "I think instead they would say they heard an uplifting piece, a piece transcending feelings of earthly mortality and connecting with something much larger than themselves."

Tickets for the concert, \$3-\$15, may be purchased at [music.yale.edu](http://music.yale.edu) or 203-432-4140. Tickets are also available in the Woolsey Rotunda. Music history professor Paul Berry will give a free preconcert lecture at 7 p.m. in Sudler Hall next to Sprague Hall.