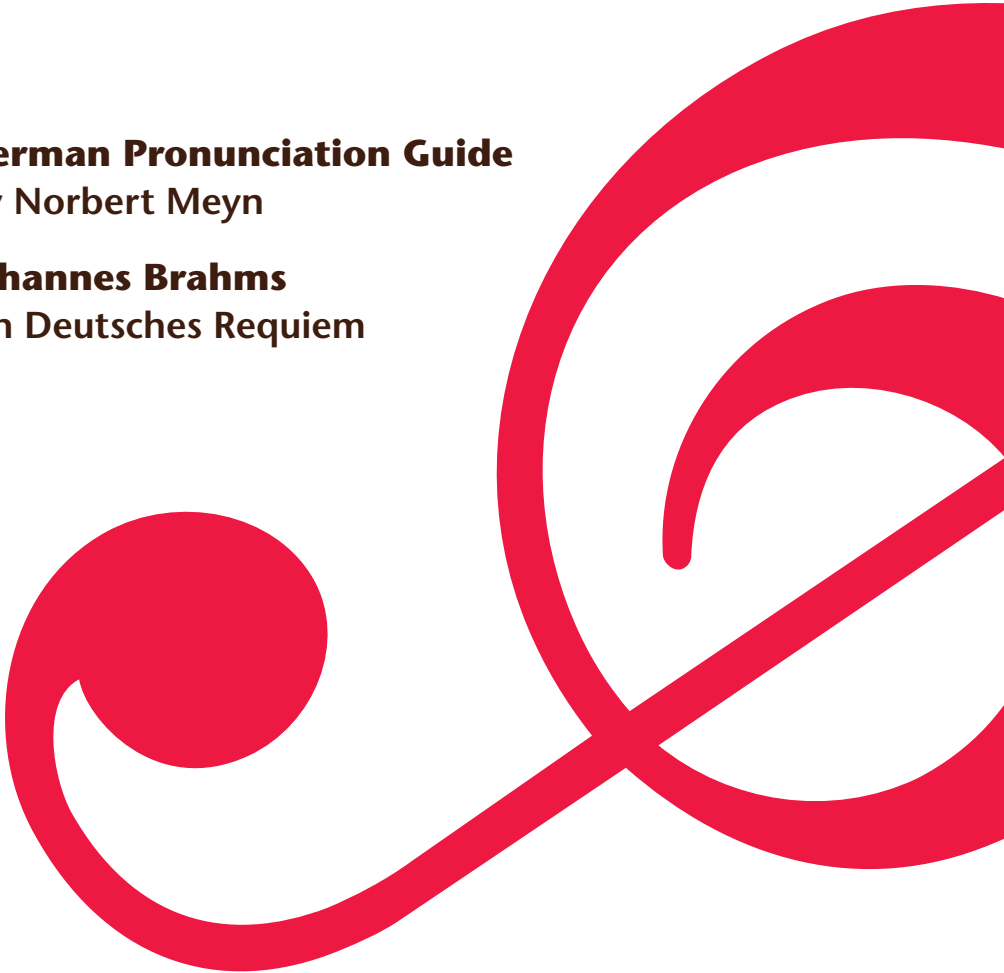




German Pronunciation Guide
by Norbert Meyn

Johannes Brahms
Ein Deutsches Requiem



Introduction

This ChoraLine pronunciation guide comes in three parts.

1 THE CHORALINE GUIDE TO SINGING IN GERMAN (Page 2)

with clear examples and symbols for vowel sounds, important consonants and inflection.

2 A LIST OF SOUNDS AND SYMBOLS (Page 7)

for reference and practice: using English word comparisons.

3 THE COMPLETE TEXT OF THE CHORAL WORK (Page 10)

with a word-for-word translation, phonetic (IPA) symbols for difficult vowel sounds and consonants, and clearly marked stresses of important syllables and words.

The introduction, the list of sounds and symbols and the textbook work in parallel with the ChoraLine Pronunciation CD, and we recommend using them together for combined aural and visual learning. You can find the CD trackmarks throughout the booklet.

Even if you do not speak any German, this guide will enable you to pronounce the text correctly and with confidence. With the word for word translation you can communicate the specific meaning of each word through your singing. It will also help you to enunciate the important words and syllables in each phrase, so that the audience can understand it clearly and enjoy the many expressive colours of the language.

Norbert Meyn

If you have purchased the ChoraLine Pronunciation CD, please play it now as you read on.



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PN001

CD TRACK 1

1 The ChoraLine Guide to Singing in German

In singing we use the highest and purest form of the German Language, **Hochsprache** or **Bühnensprache** (stage-language).

CD TRACK 2

VOWELS

German has a greater variety of vowel sounds than many other languages.

All German vowel sounds have both **open** and **closed** variations.

OPEN VOWELS

Open vowels are **usually short** (when spoken), and mostly followed by two or more consonants.

ɔ	u
Gott	Mutter
God	mother

CLOSED VOWELS

Closed vowels are usually long (when spoken).

o:	u:
groß	gut
great	good

In the ChoraLine pronunciation guide, open (or short) vowels are marked with capital letters and closed (or long) vowels are marked with lower case letters.

For clarity it is very important that when singing, open and closed vowels are clearly differentiated. The only exception is the letter a, which can be spoken short or long, but is always sung as a bright Italianate a.

THE WRITTEN VOWELS e AND i

The open and closed versions of these vowels are formed mainly by the tongue, which gradually assumes a higher position in the mouth.

	IPA SYMBOL
A colon after a vowel means it is pronounced long.	
open e	ɛ
closed e	e:
open i	ɪ
closed i	i:

THE WRITTEN VOWELS o AND u

Here the open and closed versions are formed mainly by the mouth and lips, which gradually close.

	IPA SYMBOL
open o	ɔ
closed o	o:
open u	u
closed u	u:

UMLAUTS ä, ö AND ü

Open or closed, they are formed with the same mouth shape as their counterparts without the two dots, by raising the tongue inside the mouth.

	IPA SYMBOL
ä	ɛ (this is the same sound as the open e)
open ö	œ
closed ö	ø:
open ü	ʏ
closed ü	y:

CD TRACK 4

THE SCHWA SOUND

This is a very neutral sound, which is used when the letter e occurs in an unstressed position. An example would be the first syllable in the word **Geduld** (patience) or the last syllable in the word **Leben** (life). In singing this sound is usually bright and never strongly projected.

	IPA SYMBOL
e (schwa) as in Leben (life)	ə

THE SCHWA SOUND II

This sometimes replaces the letter r, for example in the German word **mehr** (more). This sound can also replace the ending -er, exactly as in the English word 'better', or in the last syllable of the German word **Butter** (butter).

	IPA SYMBOL
-er, r (schwa II) as in Butter (butter)	ɐ

DIPHTHONGS

Diphthongs are made up of two vowels. In singing the second vowel is only sounded at the very last moment.

CD TRACK 5

	IPA SYMBOL
ai as in Mai (May)	a ^e
au as in Traum (dream)	a ^o
eu as in heute (today)	ɔ̯

The second vowel is not as closed as the spelling suggests, and closes only partly.

CD TRACK 6

IMPORTANT CONSONANTS AND GROUPS OF CONSONANTS

h		This is always silent after a vowel, and the preceding vowel is always long and closed, as in the word gehen (to go).
ch 1	(ç)	as in the word ich (I). This sound can be difficult. It is produced by touching the edges of your tongue against the upper teeth at the sides of your mouth, and the tip of your tongue touching the lower teeth at the front of your mouth. The sound is then made quite high up in the mouth by passing air over the tongue. It is similar to the first part of the English word 'huge', but stronger and more projected.
ch 2	(x)	'ch' can also be pronounced in the throat as in the word Nacht (night). It is made by air friction quite low in the throat and is the same sound as that in the Scottish word 'loch'.
chs	(ks)	If 'ch' is followed by an 's', then it is pronounced as a 'k' – as in the word wachsen (to grow).
-ig	(ç)	When words end in -ig, this is pronounced 'ich' – as in the word for king – König .
-iglich		If the '-ig' is followed by -lich the 'g' becomes a 'k' as in the word königlich (royally).
ng	(ŋ)	This is always pronounced with a soft 'g' as in the English word 'sing', and not with a hard 'g' as in 'finger'.
nk		is pronounced as in English 'thank', or in German, Dank .
qu		is pronounced 'kv' as in the word for Quelle (source), not 'kw' as in the Italian word 'quella'.
s		If the letter 's' is followed by a vowel, then it is voiced like an English 'z' as in the word Sonne (sun).
st	(ft)	is mostly pronounced 'sht' as in the word Stille (silence).
sp	(fp)	becomes 'shp' as in Spiel (a game).
sch	(ʃ)	is pronounced 'sh' as in schön (beautiful).
z		is pronounced 'ts' as in Zimmer (a room).
v		is generally pronounced 'f' as in Vogel (bird).
w		is pronounced as the English 'v', as in the word Welle (a wave) or Wasser (water).

CD TRACK 7

Voiced consonants like b, d and g become de-voiced if at the end of a word or before another consonant.

b	becomes 'p' in gab (gave),
d	becomes 't' in und (and),
g	becomes 'k' in Schlag (strike).
r	When singing, the letter 'r' is rolled with the tongue, and quite strongly in expressive words like Rache (revenge). But it may also be just flicked as in a word like kurz (short). When the letter 'r' occurs at the end of a word, it is often replaced by the neutral schwa sound as in the word der (the), as described above – schwa sound II.

CD TRACK 8

THE GLOTTAL STOP

When singing in German the “glottal stop” is important, as it helps to achieve clarity. This means that words beginning with a vowel have to be separated from the previous word with a re-articulation.

Example: **Am Abend** (in the evening).

In a glottal stop the vocal folds are closed for a moment and then opened again with a gentle explosion. In singing this should be quite smooth and should hardly interrupt the line.

INFLECTION

All German words have one stressed syllable, and this is often the first syllable. When singing in German, inflection is the key to a beautiful line. Unstressed syllables are projected less than in other languages, and this results in a lilting line that moves from one stress to the next.

In the text of the ChoraLine pronunciation guide, we have underlined stressed syllables and we have also underlined the important words in a phrase. This is because German is a very onomatopoeic language, and the stressed syllables or words often carry the expression. This is especially true in singing.

CD TRACK 9

2

List of Sounds and Symbols for Reference and Practice

VOWELS

SPELLING	IPA SYMBOL	EXAMPLE	ENGL. COMPARISON
a	a, a:	Vater (father)	-
ä, open e	ɛ	Bett (bed) Träne (teardrop)	bed, better
closed e	e:	Leben (life)	eh?
open i	ɪ	Bitte (please)	it
closed i	i:	Liebe (love)	see
open o	ɔ	Gott (God)	cough
closed o	o:	Rose (rose)	-
open u	ʊ	Mutter (mother)	book
closed u	u:	Ruhe (rest)	two
open ö	œ	Göttin (Goddess)	-
closed ö	ø:	schön (beautiful)	-
open ü	ʏ	Glück (happiness)	-
closed ü	y:	süß (sweet)	-

Remember: a colon after a symbol means the vowel is pronounced long.

CD TRACK 10

Schwa sounds I and II:

e	ə	Geduld (patience) Leben (life)	the
r, -er	ɐ	mehr (more) Mutter (mother)	better

CD TRACK 11

DIPHTHONGS

ai, ei	a ^e	Mai (May)	try
au	a ^o	Traum (dream)	house
eu, äu	ɔ ^ø	heute (today)	boy

IMPORTANT CONSONANTS

CD TRACK 12

SPELLING	IPA SYMBOL	EXAMPLE	ENGL. COMPARISON
ch	ç	ich (I)	<u>h</u> uge
ch	x	Nacht (night)	(Scottish) lo <u>ch</u>
chs	ks	wachsen (to grow)	a <u>x</u> e
-ig	g becomes ç	König (king)	-
-iglich	g becomes k	königlich (kingly)	-
h		gehen (to go)	-
j	j	ja (yes)	-
l	(always forward)	Himmel (heaven)	<u>l</u> ove (not: all)

CD TRACK 13

VOICED CONSONANTS AT END OF WORDS

d	becomes t	und (and)	-
b	becomes p	gab (gave)	-
g	becomes k	Schlag (strike/ hit)	-

FURTHER CONSONANTS

ng	ŋ	Klang (sound)	do <u>ing</u> , (not: <u>finger</u>)
nk	ŋk	Dank (thanks)	than <u>k</u>
qu	kv not kw	Quelle (source)	-

CD TRACK 14

s	z	Sonne (sun) ansehen (to look at)	<u>z</u> ip
st	ft	Stille (silence)	fish- <u>t</u> ank
sp	fp	Spiel (game)	fish- <u>p</u> ond
sch	ʃ	schön (beautiful)	<u>sh</u> ip

CD TRACK 15

z	ts	Zimmer (room)	net <u>s</u>
v	f	Vogel (bird)	<u>f</u> un
w	v	Wasser (water)	<u>v</u> ase

r rolled strongly
 flicked with tongue
 replaced with schwa

Räuber (robber)
kurz (short)
der (the)

CD TRACK 16

GLOTTAL STOP (GENTLE RE-ARTICULATION):

Between words: **am / Abend** (in the evening)

Within a word: **un/ausgeglichen** (unbalanced)

INFLECTION (STRESSING UNDERLINED SYLLABLES):

und kommen mit Freuden (and come with joy)

Note about Word for Word Translations

The syntax (word order) of English sentences differs considerably from German. For this reason most singing translations or other available translations of poetic texts are not enough to identify the meaning of individual words in a text.

Word-for-word translations work around this problem, and they save you having to look up many individual words in the dictionary. Most of the time the meaning of a phrase is still obvious although the word order is unusual. If you cannot make sense of a line it is worth referring to a normal translation as available on the Internet or in a CD booklet. You should be able to piece together a coherent picture that way.

Knowing the exact meaning of individual words, which are often drawn out and repeated in music, is important for singing with the right expression and with confidence.

3 The Complete Text of the Choral Work

JOHANNES BRAHMS – EIN DEUTSCHES REQUIEM

MOVEMENT I
CD TRACK 17

ze: ç zl t i: a: a^{et} t a:
Selig **sind**, **die** **da** **Leid** **tragen**,
 Blessed are, who (ever) suffering bear

ε z i: zɔ ø: v e:
denn **sie** **sollen** **getröstet** **werden**.
 for they shall comforted be

i: l ε zε
Die **mit** **Tränen** **säen**,
 They (who) with tears sow,

ve: l ɔø ε
werden **mit** **Freuden** **ernten**.
 shall with joy reap.

Zi: e: l U t V a^e
Sie **gehen** **hin** **und** **weinen**
 They go forth and weep

U t a: e: Za:
und **tragen** **edlen** **Samen**,
 and bear precious seed,

U t ɔ l ɔø
und **kommen** **mit** **Freuden**
 and come with joy

U t l i: a:
und **bringen** **ihre** **Garben**.
 and bring their sheaves.

MOVEMENT II
CD TRACK 18

ε a^e f ε l v a:
Denn **alles** **Fleisch**, **es** **ist** **wie** **Gras**
 For all flesh, it is like grass

U t ε ç a^e ε ε f
und **alle** **Herrlichkeit** **des** **Menschen**
 and all glory of man

vi: ε z s u:
wie **des** **Grases** **Blumen**.
 like the grass(es) flowers

a: l fε ɔ
Das **Gras** **ist** **verdorret**
 the grass is withered

U t i: u: p
und **die** **Blume** **abgefallen**.
 and the flower fall off.

Zo: zaet u: U ç i: y:
So **seid** **nun** **geduldig**, **liebe** **Brüder**,
 So be now patient, dear brothers,

l a^o i: tsu: ε ε
bis **auf** **die** **Zukunft** **des** **Herrn**.
 unto (on) the future of (the) Lord.

Zi: a^e k v
Siehe, **ein** **Ackermann** **wartet**
 Behold, a husbandman waits

a^o i: œ lç Ux e: e:
auf **die** **köstliche** **Frucht** **der** **Erde**
 for the delicious fruit (of) the earth

U t l U ç y:
und **ist** **geduldig** **darüber**,
 and is patient about it,

MOVEMENT II

CD TRACK 18

l e: ɛ a: e: ɔ e:
bis er empfahe den Morgenregen
until he receives the morning rain

U t t e:
und Abendregen.
and evening rain.

zo: za^{et} U ç
So seid geduldig.
So be patient.

ɛ ɛ vɔ a^e l e:v lç a^e
Aber des Herrn Wort bleibt in Ewigkeit.
But the Lords word remains in eternity.

i: ɛ ø:z ɛ ɛ ve: vi: ɔ
Die Erlöseten des Herrn werden wieder kommen
The redeemed (of) the Lord shall again come

U t ɛ tsi:ɔ ɔ l a^oxts
und gen Zion kommen mit Jauchzen.
and to Zion come with rejoicing.

ɔ^ø e:vl ɔ^ø
Freude, ewige Freude
Joy, eternal joy

v l t y: i: a^o za^e
wird über ihrem Haupte sein;
shall over their head(s) be.

ɔ^ø U t vɔ ve: zi: ɛ a^e
Freude und Wonne werden sie ergreifen,
Joy and bliss shall them possess.

U t ʃ ɛ ts U t zɔ^ø ts vl t vɛ k Y
und Schmerz und Seufzen wird weg müssen.
and pain and sighing will (go) away have to.

MOVEMENT III

CD TRACK 19

ɛ e: ɔx lç
Herr, lehre doch mich,
Lord, teach but me,

s a^e ɛ l i: a: Us
daß ein Ende mit mir haben muß,
that an end with me have (it) must.

U t a^e e: a^e tsi:
und mein Leben ein Ziel hat,
and (that) my life an aim has,

U t lç fɔ Us
und ich davon muß.
and I away must (go).

zi: a^e a: zl t a^e t a^e fo: i:
Siehe, meine Tage sind einer Handbreit vor dir,
Behold, my days are a hand-breadth before you,

U t a^e e: l vi: lç fo: i:
und mein Leben ist wie nichts vor dir.
and my life is like nothing before you.

x vi: a: lç zl t ɛ ʃ
Ach, wie gar nichts sind alle Menschen,
Oh, like nothing are all people,

i: ɔx zo: zlç e:
die doch so sicher leben.
who but so safely live.

zi: e: e: vi: a^e ʃ e:
Sie gehen daher wie ein Schemen,
They walk along like a shadow.

U t x i: fi: fɛ e:p lç U u:
und machen ihnen viel vergebliche Unruhe;
and make each other much vain disquiet;

MOVEMENT III CD TRACK 19

zi: z U t vl lç ve: ε i: vl t
sie sammeln und wissen nicht wer es kriegen wird.
 they gather and know not who it receive will.

u: ε vε zɔ lç lç ø:
Nun Herr, wess soll ich mich trösten?
 Now Lord, (with) what shall I myself console?

lç ɔ a^o lç
Ich hoffe auf dich.
 I hope in thee.

e: ε ç ze: zl t l ɔ t
Der Gerechten Seelen sind in Gottes Hand
 The just souls are in God's hand

U t a^e kv y: zi:
und keine Qual rühret sie an.
 and no torment touches them.

MOVEMENT IV CD TRACK 20

i: i:p lç zl t a^e vo: Uŋ ε ts e: a/ɔt
Wie lieblich sind deine Wohnungen, Herr Zebaoth!
 How lovely are your dwellings, Lord (of) Sabaoth!

a^e ze: fε ŋ U t ze: zlç
Meine Seele verlanget und sehnet sich
 My soul desires and longs (itself)

x e: fo: ø: ε ε
nach den Vorhöfen des Herrn;
 for the courts of the Lord;

a^e a^e p U t ze: ɔ^ø zl ç
mein Leib und Seele freuen sich
 my body and soul delight (themselves)

l e: e: ε l ɔ
in dem lebendigen Gott.
 In the living God.

o e: i: l a^e a^oz vo:
Wohl denen, die in deinem Hause wohnen,
 Blessing (to) them, who in your house dwell,

i: o: lç l
Die loben dich immerdar.
 they praise you forever.

MOVEMENT V

CD TRACK 21

i: p u: ao lç a^e
Ihr habt nun Traurigkeit;
You have now sadness;

lç vl ɔ^øç vi: ze:
aber ich will euch wiedersehen
but I shall you again see.

U t ɔ^ø ɛ ts zɔ zlç ɔ^ø
und euer Herz soll sich freuen
and your heart shall (itself) rejoice

U t ɔ^ø ɔ^ø zɔ i: t fɔ ɔ^øç e:
und eure Freude soll niemand von euch nehmen.
and your joy shall nobody from you take.

ze: lç
Sehet mich an:
Look at me (at).

lç a: a^e a^e ts a^e
Ich habe eine kleine Zeit
I have (had) a small time

y: U t a^e p
Mühe und Arbeit gehabt
Toil and labour (had).

U t a: o: o: U
und habe großen Trost gefunden.
and have great consolation found.

lç vl ɔ^øç ø: vi: a^e za^e U ø:
Ich will euch trösten, wie Einen seine Mutter tröstet.
I shall you comfort, as one (by) one's mother is comforted.

MOVEMENT VI

CD TRACK 22

ɛ vi: a: i: a^e a^e ft
Denn wir haben hie keine bleibende Statt,
For we have here no lasting

zɔ i: tsu: Y zu:x vi:
sondern die zukünftige suchen wir.
but the future (one) seek we.

zi: lç za: ɔ^øç a^e a^e l
Siehe, ich sage euch ein Geheimnis:
Behold, I tell you a secret:

Vi: ve: lç ɛ f a:
Wir werden nicht alle entschlafen,
We will not all die,

Vi: ve: a: fɛ v ve:
wir werden aber alle verwandelt werden;
we will but all changed be;

U t ɛ l œ ts lç l a^e a^o l
und dasselbige plötzlich, in einem Augenblick,
and that suddenly, in a blinking of an eye,

tsu: e: ts a^e e: ɛ tst o:za^o
zu der Zeit der letzten Posaune.
At the time (of) the last trombone.

ɛ ɛs vl t i: o:za^o f
Denn es wird die Posaune schallen,
For it will the trombone sound,

U t i: o: e: a^o /ɛ fte: U fɛ ve:s lç
und die Toten werden aufstehen unverweslich;
and the dead will rise again imperishable;

U t vi: ve: fɛ v ve:
und wir werden verwandelt werden.
And we will changed be.

MOVEMENT VI

CD TRACK 22

l t ɛ Y ve:
Dann wird erfüllet werden
Then will fulfilled be

vɔ ʃ i: ʃte:
das Wort, das geschrieben steht:
the word, which written stands:

e: o:t l f ʃ Uŋ l e: zi:k
Der Tod ist verschlungen in den Sieg.
(The) death is entangled in the victory.

o:t vo: l a^e ʃt x
Tod, wo ist dein Stachel?
Death, where is your sting?

œ vo: l a^e zi: k
Hölle, wo ist dein Sieg?
Hell, where is your victory?

ɛ u: l vY ç
Herr, du bist würdig
Lord, you are worthy

tsu: e: a^{es} U t e: U t
zu nehmen Preis und Ehre und Kraft,
to receive praise and honour and power,

ɛ u: lŋ ʃ
denn du hast alle Dinge geschaffen,
for you have all things created,

U t U ç a^e v l a: zi: ve: z
und durch deinen Willen haben sie das Wesen
and through your will have they their being

U t z l t ʃ
und sind geschaffen.
and are created.

MOVEMENT VII

CD TRACK 23

ze: lç z l t i: to:
Selig sind die Toten
Blessed are the dead

i: l e: ɛ ʃtɛ
die in dem Herrn sterben,
who in the lord die.

fɔ u:
von nun an.
From now on.

a: e: ae ʃp lç
Ja, der Geist spricht,
Yes, the Spirit speaks,

s zi: ru: fɔ i: a^e
daß sie ruhen von ihrer Arbeit;
that they rest from their labour;

ɛ i: ɛ ɔ i: a:x
denn ihre Werke folgen ihnen nach.
for their works follow them (after).

Note about IPA Phonetic Symbols:

The symbols in this booklet conform with the book *Deutsche Aussprache (Hochsprache-Bühnensprache-Alltagssprache)* VMA Wiesbaden 2000, ISBN 3-928127-66-7

Most dictionaries use similar symbols, but occasional variations are to be expected. This does not diminish the immense usefulness of the International Phonetic Alphabet. Once learned, these symbols can be applied to any other language and are invaluable to the amateur or professional singer.

Acknowledgements

This pronunciation guide has been devised by **Norbert Meyn**.

A professional singer, Norbert received training in his native Germany and later at the Guildhall School of Music and Drama in London. He has many years of experience as a soloist and choral singer, and teaches German Lieder, opera and diction at both the Guildhall School and at the Royal College of Music. He also enjoys working as a language coach for the BBC Singers and Symphony Chorus, as well as EMI, Deutsche Grammophon, Harmonia Mundi and Hyperion record labels. For comments or coaching enquiries please write to norbertmeyn@mac.com.

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