This paper is a guide for choral conductors interested in sharing contextual background of Brahms’s Op. 17 to a performing ensemble or audience. The paper focuses solely on the historical and contextual influences to the creation of Op. 17 without discussing theoretical, musical, or gestural issues. The research drawn from primary sources provides first-hand accounts of rehearsals and performances, as well as the character and interests of the composer. Subjects covered include Brahms’s early compositional life including his early music studies and his other early choral compositions. It also discusses the function of women’s choruses at the time, and the formation and early performances of the Hamburger Frauenchor. Lastly, it covers a textual and instrumental overview of the four-movement set. All these considerations create a valuable context for a choral conductor preparing an ensemble for the performance of Brahms's Op. 17.