

EDITORIAL

If They Heard It, They Didn't Understand It

During the June 18 session of the Manhattan Dialogue, moderator Dennis Speed asked John Sigerson, the Music Director of the Schiller Institute, to respond to a question on the sense of urgency, and the sense of responsibility that is required from Congressmen, and that we require from ourselves.

John Sigerson: Let me attempt to put a fine point on what Dennis was just saying. If the people who were at that nightclub—anybody who was at that nightclub, or anybody who goes to Disney World, and so forth, even if they knew,— maybe they've heard the Mozart *Requiem*,— they haven't really understood it. What I would say, is that once you *understand* and you actually *live* the Mozart *Requiem* and the Classical culture that was characterized by these individuals, these incredibly creative individuals like Mozart and Beethoven—who were very political, by the way—then emotionally, these things, these kinds of degraded activities, gambling, going to nightclubs, all these kinds of things,— “entertainment” in general,— just really becomes rather meaningless emotionally to one.

One is, rather, *gripped* by something which I would like to say is a *purpose*. And the problem today with a lot of people who attempt to delve into so-called “Classical” music, is that much of the Classical music

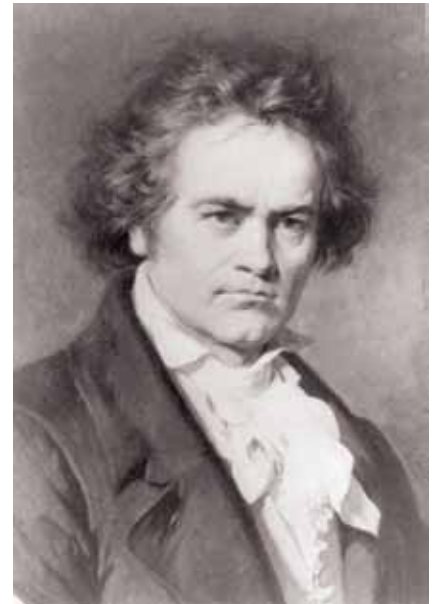
that's been done, especially since the death of the great German conductor Wilhelm Furtwängler, a lot of the Classical music that's been done since then, has lacked that purpose.

Rather, it has been a form of refined “entertainment” for the people who like to feel good, to go home from a concert “feeling good” in one way or another. And so, in a certain way, it's a kind of refined nightclub experience for a lot of people.

When we founded the Schiller Institute,— I was a founding member in 1984 with Helga Zepp-LaRouche,— one of the included intents of the Schiller Institute, was to change that and to return to a real



A bust of Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart, in Bratislava, Slovakia.



Library of Congress

Ludwig van Beethoven

idea of Classical culture. Now, when I say “Classical” maybe some people might be confused, so let me just use a way of putting that, that Lyndon LaRouche frequently would like to do.

In contrasting the Romanticism of, say, a Richard Wagner, to the Classicism of, say, a beautiful Beethoven symphony, he would say that with Wagner, you don’t “leave a dry seat in the house.” As opposed to with Beethoven, you don’t “leave a dry eye in the house.”

That really is it: Because Classical does not mean a period of music, and a period of time—you know, you had the Baroque, and you had the Classical, and then you had the post-Classical, and then you have the Romantic, all this stuff. That’s meaningless. “Classical” is an idea; it’s a concept; it’s a principle. It’s a principle of a way of thinking, which is why this question of Einstein comes up.

One of the ways that Einstein would figure things out, is once he reached a certain kind of impasse in his thinking, in his working out of problems, he would put down whatever he was writing, his writing implements, and whatever he was working on; and he would pick up his violin. And he would play, usually Bach, but also Mozart as well. And that was the way he would be able to work these paradoxes through.

Because one of the things about Classical



From a print in the British Museum
Johann Sebastian Bach (1685-1750), German musician and composer, shown here playing the organ, circa 1725.

music that’s different than any other kinds of music, is that it implicitly poses a paradox, which in order for you to solve, you have to have an idea of a purpose. And as Schiller pointed out, in a lot of his aesthetic writings, when you do a concert or something like that, any kind of event, you have failed if you just send people back, “feeling good,” and feeling just sort of “elevated.”

We went to one of these events just the other day, of the “Big Sing” up there at St. John the Divine. And we sang a lot of good music there, with this huge—how big was that chorus? Four or five hundred people there, singing. This was part of the Choral Consortium, and it was a lot of not bad music, including some Bach pieces.

There were certain platitudes that were said by each of the conductors about Orlando and so forth. But clearly, the people left there, by and large,— outside of the people whom *we* talked to about the idea of doing a

memorial for 9/11,— outside of that, most people just went, having that “warm, fuzzy feeling.”

Let me talk about the *Requiem* just a little bit: The first time that we performed the *Requiem* was shortly after the Schiller Institute was founded, in 1984. In October 1984, the Prime Minister of India, Indira Gandhi, whom both Lyndon and Helga had met with and were friends with, was assassinated. Since then,



A statue of Friedrich Schiller in Detroit, Michigan.

Steve Carr

it has always been my intent, and our intent, never to do a *Requiem* just for the sake of doing a piece of music. A *Requiem* is a very special kind of celebration of the life of the individual, and the life of the individual after his mortal remains have passed. And you need to focus on an individual, and in that case it was Indira Gandhi, and we did that, and we really freaked people out when we did that.

For many of the enemies of the LaRouche movement, the FBI, people who were dedicated to stopping everything that LaRouche represented,— this was a last straw. Shortly after that, many of the real attacks and the legal attacks and jailings and frameups occurred in the late 1980s and 1990s, which sent Mr. LaRouche and many of our associates to jail for a number of years.

We're past that. But, we continue to think about and to rebuild that idea of the Mozart *Requiem* as a very important instrument for the uplifting of human beings, to give them an idea of what it really means to be human.

So, once you leave a concert, if it's successful, you leave the concert having made a decision to change. If you haven't decided to change, if the concert has not changed you— nowadays, people say they're "moved," but really, what does that mean? If you're really moved, you're moved *to change*, to change the way you think, to reject something that may have been



EIRNS/Stuart Lewis

Indira Gandhi at the National Press Club in Washington, D.C., July 30, 1982.

quite remarkable, at that time, because we found that *nobody else* was doing anything about this! There was nobody else who really was saying—I mean there were a couple of people saying a few things, but nobody was really celebrating who Kennedy *was*, and what he represented, and the kind of *hope* that he represented, for developing the *entire world*, the entire world economy. And that was a very successful concert

very dear to you, but you realize it's inferior, and therefore you have to get rid of it, like smoking or something, or drugs, or something else that you have to give up, because you've found that there's something higher, something more important.

The second time we did the Mozart *Requiem* I think was two and half years ago, in Boston. Again, this had a great purpose, which was the memorializing of [the 50th anniversary of] the assassination of John F. Kennedy. And it was really

quite remarkable, at that time, because we found that *nobody else* was doing anything about this! There was nobody else who really was saying—I mean there were a couple of people saying a few things, but nobody was really celebrating who Kennedy *was*, and what he represented, and the kind of *hope* that he represented, for developing the *entire world*, the entire world economy. And that was a very successful concert that we gave up in Boston at the Holy Cross Cathedral, to a full audience of 1,200.

We also did a performance of it around that same time in northern Virginia, which was also quite interesting, because of various—and we decided *not* to do it right inside Washington, D.C., when we found we had a much better response outside of Washington (surprise, surprise!).

We are now in the process of putting together something which is yet bigger, which is a series of



Franklin D. Roosevelt Library

Eleanor Roosevelt and Presidential Candidate John F. Kennedy in New York, Oct. 11, 1960.

concerts of the Mozart *Requiem*, one after the other, over the series of days over the weekend of 9/11, which is the 15th anniversary of 9/11. 9/11 happens to be itself, falling on a Sunday, and we are going to be performing the *Requiem* as part of a celebratory Mass at a major church.

But we're also going to be having performances in almost every other borough in New York on other days around that time. That's the intent.

And the other intent to do it, is as I said, in a way that's not just celebrating—it's going to be political, in the way that we're talking about. That is, there's no way, nowadays, especially with what's happened in Orlando, and what's going on with the 28 pages, and the incredible fight that's now bursting out in Congress—there's no way that you can say that these things are apolitical. I mean, hopefully,—let us hope that by the time we do that performance on 9/11, Obama will have already been gone. That would be a very good celebration.

I encourage those people who have not participated with our chorus, to participate. We are openly inviting people to join in and work on the Mozart *Requiem* over this Summer. We have many people whom we've met over the last few weeks, who are very interested in coming in, maybe even bringing their whole choruses in. So we could end up with a quite large chorus, as long as people come to the rehearsals, so that they can actually do it properly.

I think that's what I want to say right now. It's going to be a really big deal, doing these, and it's going to make an *incredible* impact, through the metropolitan area and around the world as far as I can see. Because we're going to be doing the only thing—I mean, there will probably be other very emotional ceremonies, going on on 9/11. But I think what we're doing is going to raise that to the highest level, which is what we have to do, so that we really give meaning to the lives of *every single human being's life*, who was slaughtered on that day 15 years ago.