

Let Us Bury the ‘Old, Evil Songs’ of a Dying Culture

by Jennifer Pearl and John Sigerson

May 12—The Schiller Boston Community Chorus presented a “Concert for a New Paradigm” on Sunday, May 6, centered on two major works, Robert Schumann’s *Dichterliebe*, performed by tenor John Sigerson and pianist Barbara Suhrstedt, and J.S. Bach’s choral motet, *Jesu, Meine Freude*. The concert was held at St. Mary’s Episcopal Church in Dorchester, Massachusetts

While the concert was sparked by the tragic school shooting in Parkland, Florida earlier this year, it is part of a larger mission by the Schiller Boston chorus to recruit adults and youth, professionals and non-professionals in the city of Boston and surrounding areas to the mission of creating a new American culture to replace the culture of death that has seeped into our republic since the end of World War II.

As Lyndon LaRouche wrote in his 1999 paper, “[Star Wars and Littleton](#),” “How does one corrupt innocent children into becoming psychotic-like killers? The quick answer to that question, is: dehumanize the image of man.” The violent and degenerate actions of such terrorists groups as ISIS and the American school killers reflect the same quality of dehumanization found in today’s movies, music, and popular culture. Combined with the collapsing physical economy of the United States, and the lack of education and productive jobs, this has created a sense of hopelessness among young Americans of all socio-economic backgrounds. While popular music amplifies the current sad state of affairs and comments crudely upon it, it is only through great classical

art that you can access the creativity and educate the passionate courage needed to change the current and future condition of mankind.

If America is going to whole-heartedly join the New Silk Road, there has to be a change in our culture. Classical music is currently performed in a boring and literal way to a snooty audience of high-price ticket-holders, while everyone else is watching “The Voice” and rooting for the next teenage pop star. Through our work, we are beginning to demonstrate that the communication of profound ideas through irony is the key to moving the soul of your audience and actually making them better people!

The May 6 concert drew a wide range of people from throughout the Boston area and not the usual “classical music concert-goers.” The program began with three African-American spirituals, which set the tone and gave the audience a chance to directly connect,

through the English language, to what followed. The spirituals were followed by the aria “Ah la paterna mano,” from Giuseppe Verdi’s opera *Macbeth*, sung by tenor Brian Landry, and a series of Handel and Brahms songs sung by soprano Annicia Smith and contralto Ana Maria Ugarte.

What Is a Poet To Do?

Central to the program was Robert Schumann’s cycle of sixteen songs, *Dichterliebe*, with poetry by Heinrich Heine. John Sigerson prefaced his performance by saying, “This is not a piece about the love affair between two people, but about having



EIRNS/Kevin Pearl

Jennifer Pearl, speaking at “Concert for a New Paradigm” at St. Mary’s Episcopal Church in Dorchester, Massachusetts, with Father Edwin Johnson.

a love affair with humanity, and all he or she receives back is a slap in the face. What is a poet to do? The subject of these songs is the poet's struggle with infantile emotions to get through to a higher emotion, represented in the final piece, talking about burying all these old songs."

Properly performed, this song cycle is a frontal assault on the fundamental tenet of Romanticism, namely that since (so the Romantics claim) it is impossible to gain intelligible knowledge of universal principles, all human knowledge must be ultimately based on sense-perception alone, just as it is with other beasts.

Locked thus inside the prison of sense-perception, men are simply talking beasts, and can only regulate their affairs through sets of rules governed by logic.

That was the argument of Immanuel Kant (1724-1804), whom the Schiller Institute's namesake, Friedrich Schiller, flatly rejected, and whom Heine directly refuted in his book *Religion and Philosophy in Germany*, aptly describing Kant as "the Robespierre of philosophy" because, rather than chopping off men's heads, Kant wanted to chop off their souls.

As Lyndon LaRouche wrote in 1982 as a commentary on Sigerson's first public performance of *Dichterliebe*:

The *Dichterliebe* is one of the most rip-roaringly funny compositions ever written. An audience which grasps the point will be either doubled over with laughter, or savagely enraged. That is the measure of the proper, successful rendering. . . .

Music's result is exactly the result of poetry, but in terms of a polyphonic domain. That result is irony—is comedy, tragedy, based on the principle of the Socratic dialogue. To this comedy or tragedy only one thing can be



EIRNS/Jennifer Pearl

Soprano Michele Fuchs, performing at "Concert for a New Paradigm" at St. Mary's Episcopal Church in Dorchester, Massachusetts.

added: successful musical (polyphonic) resolution. That latter is the Promethean principle in music. Only Promethean music can be satisfying.

A number of those who attended had never heard live classical music and were visibly awed by the performance of the *Dichterliebe*. Some wondered, how could John remember all those words? One person remarked, "It was so funny, of course—the coffin was so heavy at the end because it had all the loves and losses in it weighing it down."

People were intensely following the English translation of the sixteen-song German cycle. It was so quiet, you could have heard a pin drop in the room, and not one person got up during the entire thirty-minute song cycle. A handful of younger people laughed a lot during the *Dichterliebe*, saying later they "never thought classical music could be so funny!" One leading member of the church commented that he was "with John every step of the way."

Nobody performs this piece, nor other such classical pieces, with this sense of irony. Instead, they are always performed as Romantic, sappy, literal stories that you are supposed to "relate to." But, the relatable aspect of this is not the romanticism but rather the transformation that the artist portrays. This process of transformation, to a

higher emotional state and a higher understanding, is the true purpose of art—providing a pathway for the audience to discover things about themselves and the world, such that they might understand better and overcome the problems that they and their world face. We can overcome the problems that prevent us from being better, more creative, and more effective human beings. Such a transformation is a key requirement for the American people to embrace the New Paradigm.



EIRNS/Rachel Brown

Tenor John Sigerson and pianist Barbara Suhrstedt, at "Concert for a New Paradigm" at St. Mary's Episcopal Church in Dorchester, Massachusetts.