

200 YEAR NEWS FLASH!

Schumann Sighted at His Own Birthday Fest in Virginia!

by Aaron Halevy

June 21—At the conclusion of our Robert Schumann Bicentennial Birthday Celebration on Sunday, June 20, 2010, a happiness flowed over the participants, which could only be described as a type of spiritual satisfaction, coupled with the heavy weight of the new task ahead of us. Many of the youth involved in this workshop and concert, from both the Purcellville, Va., area, and from various locales across the country, were forced to soberly reflect on the fact that a new Renaissance is indeed necessary for the possibility of a future; but, at the same time, if we do not commit to making it, it will not happen. This, in itself, is a culminating and concluding point of major accomplishment in a process which has taken place over years, as well as the beginning of something much greater.¹

In parallel to the scientific work being spearheaded by the “Basement” (see p. 9), the international LaRouche Youth Movement (LYM) has been working on the crucial developments of the cultural history of the Classical arts. As Lyndon and Helga LaRouche have emphasized for many years, as society decays and destroys itself, one must examine the wrong approaches in all areas of society, and replace them with approaches based on reason and the constant development for the future. Put bluntly, our culture today makes shit feel embarrassed! So the challenge is to re-discover the breakthroughs of the greatest composers, to re-experi-

ence their compositions, and bring these developments in human creativity back into the consciousness of the population.

This is not a new approach: Friedrich Schiller lays the basis for this in his 1795 study, *On the Aesthetic Education of Man*.

Nature begins with man no differently than with the rest of its works: it acts for him where he cannot act as an independent intelligence yet himself. But just this makes him man, that he doesn't remain what simple nature made of him, but possesses the ability to retrace the steps, through reason, which nature prepared for him, to transform the work of need into a work of his free choice, and to elevate physical necessity to a moral one.²

The crucial study in the rediscovery process of this lost culture has been the intense work on the Classical choral music of J.S. Bach's *Jesu, meine Freude*; W.A. Mozart's *Ave Verum Corpus*; and, more recently, the last movement of Beethoven's *9th Symphony*. There are many recordings of the LYM performing these works,³ but only recently, have there been any major breakthroughs. To give the reader a better sense of the process, let us look at the pivotal changes in this program.

1. The celebration itself can be seen at www.larouhepac.com/node/14921 and www.larouhepac.com/node/14931, and should be watched in full, both parts, for the full effect.

2. From Schiller's "Third Letter," unpublished translation by Patricia Noble.

3. www.SchillerInstitute.org



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Schiller Institute board member Harley Schlanger (left) welcomed the audience to Robert Schumann's 200th birthday celebration; while David Shavin (right), a scholar and author of music history, discussed his recent article on the Schumanns, Mendelssohns, and their circle. Both also participated in the five days of workshops and rehearsals leading up to the concert.

The Process Is Greater than the Event

As this writer remembers very well, the deepening of this work began with the very personal and intense challenge from Lyndon LaRouche himself, at a choral rehearsal of the *Ave Verum Corpus*, at the end of 2007, which LaRouche attended. The singing of the notes of the piece that night had been precisely worked out in each vocal section, the timing was right, the strings were in good pitch, and the words were clearly pronounced; all of us in the chorus felt that this was the best that we had ever done.

As we broke up, some people began to pack up the recording equipment, some chatted on their way out the door, and old Lyndon could be seen, walking into the living room, somewhat agitated, somewhat frustrated; he mumbled to those trying to ask him this or that, but he interrupted himself and the rest of us, as he began to speak in a tone which we could all clearly hear, a tone which was different than at the dinner table, or at a web-cast.

He had a heavy, *sagacious* anger in his voice, and it stopped us frozen in our tracks, and he spoke to this effect: There has to be a profound sense of Awe, and it's not there! It's just not there!... A hushed terror, so to speak. ... It's like a child comes into the room, and looks up, quiet and stunned and says, 'My mummy and daddy were just killed, what do I do?' It's like that! It's terrifying....

“Look at our situation today, we are in the greatest crisis in history, and these people in the Congress are acting like damn idiots! The whole economic system is coming down and they are doing nothing. The President is a bumbling idiot. This situation is that serious! And this music is that serious, and this is what has to come across in this piece! The problem is that people are not really participating in the piece. You have to be the mourning crowd. You clearly have to see Him in front of you; you have to see this body and communicate that intensity of that moment.”

Needless to say, we were all profoundly moved by this chal-

lenge, and, from that moment on, there has been a constant struggle to get to the true substance of that piece of Mozart's, in particular. The challenge can be understood as akin to the one that the physical scientist has to face in his work: There is something you want to understand, and once you understand, you have the challenge of communicating it to other people. After many years, and a lot of hard work, only recently have some significant breakthroughs been made, as this was reflected in the discussions and ideas encapsulated by this past week's activity.

Developing an Artistic Imagination

There have been other crucial inflection points in this process of the development of the artistic imagination of our youth movement, as well, which are worth highlighting.

The fun which is necessary in music, came to us from Italy, in the master classes of the great soprano and vocal teacher, Antonella Banaudi. During her visits, many of us were inspired to take up the morality of singing, and the honesty one must have to bring beauty out of oneself.

The real political urgency needed in the work, came to us from our collaborators in Germany. In their battle to revive an optimism in the people of Germany, to enable them to join in the fight to break from the euro system, and regain their national sovereignty, they



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The fight to revive Classical culture, which the LaRouche Youth Movement is spearheading, is focused on intense study of choral music, in particular, Bach's Jesu, meine Freude, Mozart's Ave Verum Corpus, and the choral movement of Beethoven's 9th Symphony. Here, the chorus performs the Ave Verum Corpus.

have established for themselves the intention to revive the rich cultural history of Germany, which showed itself in their highly developed Classical period of the 18th and 19th centuries, beginning with Bach and Leibniz, through Brahms and Einstein, and to use this revived historical passion to inspire the people of today, and to defend their nation on that basis. To do this, they chose to construct a true performance of Beethoven's 9th Symphony in the scientific tuning of C=256.⁴

In the wake of their commitment to do this, many people have joined their efforts, and they continue to organize around this mission.

It was this historical passion for the saving of the nation, which created the right example to be imbued into all our work, and LaRouche made an effort here, in our rehearsals, to make sure it was. From this renewed passion, and also with a little help from a late friend, Norbert Brainin, and his discovery of Mozart's *Motivführung*, we have begun to make this breakthrough in commitment and passion to true musical beauty.

Although text cannot possibly do justice to the concept, it is worth describing in the following way: The central feature of a commitment to this kind of work, is not the expression of oneself in the singing of the piece,

4. www.schillerinstitute.org/music/2010/beethoven_9th_berlin_c256.html

but in the subjection of one's personal attributes, i.e., one's body, one's voice, one's opinions, to the creative mind of the composer of the work—only then can the intention begin to come through to the audience, and the performer and the audience should no longer recognize the singer, but the living creative mind of the composer.

A way to understand how this happens is found in Mr. LaRouche's writings during the last years, on the question of dynamics and the mass-strike phenomenon, which we are experiencing now in the United States. In the process, as Shelley de-

scribes it, the poets are moved, but know not why "they are yet compelled to serve that power which is seated on the throne of their own soul." And further, he writes, "They measure the circumference and sound the depths of human nature with a comprehensive and all-penetrating spirit, and they are themselves perhaps the most sincerely astonished at its manifestations; for it is less their spirit than the spirit of the age."

This is, in a sense, the same action which must take place in singing in a chorus. And this is some of what Lyn has been offering us in these sessions—a chance to experience from the inside of a process, the power of the process itself, and how you as an individual can tap into it.

The Week-Long Birthday Party

With all that in mind, take a look at the process that we created over the five days spanning the artistic workshop and celebration of Schumann's birthday.

For the last four months, and more intensely in the last four days, members of the LYM from throughout the United States have engaged in an investigation of the genius of Robert Schumann, his predecessors, and his collaborators: all of whom were brought in to help us in preparation of this celebration on Sunday afternoon.

Before the formal schedule of activities began, the week was kicked off with a meeting among the LYM

music teachers, who had gathered from around the country (i.e., Boston, Seattle, Los Angeles, the Midwest, and here, in Purcellville). This set the tone for the kind of intellectual and artistic collaboration which would then proceed to develop and mature over the course of the week, and also served to lay a cornerstone for future processes of the same type, which are already being planned and will be occurring across the country during the coming months.

During the course of the following days, there was a plan to have workshops of individual singers during the day, each day, and relevant presentations during the evening. These presentations were each composed to provoke those participating in the workshops, to develop an increasingly profound sense of what sort of thinking was involved in the attempt to recreate that moment of creativity in the mind of the composer, which is reflected in the pieces which would be studied during the workshops. (Readers are urged to visit the LPAC website, www.larouchepac.com, to view the videos of the presentations.)

On the first night of work, to officially launch the week, Jessica Tremblay (mezzosoprano) and Philip Ulanowsky (pianist) began by comparing the different musical settings of the same poetry (the *Frauenliebe und -Leben*, by the poet Chamisso), by two composers: Carl Loewe and Robert Schumann, who were contemporaries.

By the end of the presentation, it was said by many, that what they noticed was that Schumann, unlike Loewe, brought his full personality, his humanity, into his composition, and that he was not interested in merely making the poems “sound pretty,” but in getting at the ideas which exist outside the words.

On the second night, Harley Schlanger (LaRouche’s West Coast spokesman) gave a class with MyHoa Steger (pianist) on counterpoint as a uniquely human invention, to enhance human creativity, in which Schlanger focused on Bach and Mozart, and how they used chromatic thematic material (Bach’s *Chromatic*



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Lyndon LaRouche (shown here, during the Intermission) “raised the bar,” challenging the youth to go beyond the modes of sense perception, through the use of Classical irony.

Fantasy and Fugue, Mozart’s first *Haydn Quartet*, K.387), as the basis for contrapuntal development that mirrors the healthy state of a mind in discovery; he then compared this with the degenerate Richard Wagner, and his sickening use of ascending chromatic intervals to repeat the same theme, in a conscious effort to brainwash his victims.

Since the best way to communicate ideas in art is to demonstrate them in performance, that is what Harley (on violin) and MyHoa did, by playing Mozart’s *String Quartet No. 14* (K.387), joined by David Shavin (viola) and Jean-Sébastien Tremblay (cello).⁵

And the third night, John Sigerson (tenor and conductor) gave a passionate and very funny presentation on the dialoguing

minds of Heinrich Heine and Robert Schumann, through the poetry and the musical settings of Schumann’s *Dichterliebe*. John performed the song cycle in sections, reciting each poem in English and German, and revealing the discoveries that he has made in working on it with Margaret Greenspan (pianist), for over 26 years. He brought out many of the subtleties of the pieces, and brought to life the powerful irony of Heine’s biting ironies were not missed in his musical composition!⁶

The evening presentations were interspersed with intense work during the day, in which almost everybody from among LPAC’s “Basement Team” and website crew presented the product of study which they have been engaged in for weeks and months, consisting of *Lieder*, duets, and arias. In addition to songs by Robert Schumann, there was work on duets and solos by Clara Schumann, Felix and Fanny Mendelssohn, Mozart, Schubert, and J.S. Bach. The intellectual intensity of trying to “get to the bottom” of what the composer was trying to say, and bringing this out in the way the piece

5. <http://archive.larouchepac.com/node/15040>

6. <http://archive.larouchepac.com/node/15039>

was sung, was shared by the students and teachers alike, in a highly productive and generally enjoyable social process of collaboration.

Perhaps the most important input into this process of a real living artistic laboratory, came from Lyndon LaRouche himself, who, both in his newest paper⁷ and in his Saturday morning leadership discussions, really raised the bar when it comes to understanding the uniquely human challenge of communicating, via modes of sense perception, such as the audible sounds of the human voice, an immaterial and unsensed idea, from the non-sensory mind of one individual to another, through the use of Classical artistic irony.

Not the Usual ‘Happy Birthday’ Song

The final celebration, which took place on the final evening, was built upon all these ideas, which must all be taken into account to understand the level of focus and fun that was had at the celebration itself. To begin the evening concert, Schiller Institute board member Harley Schlanger, and David Shavin, the author of a recent article on the Schumanns, Mendelssohns, Dirichlets, and Riemann,⁸ made opening remarks, with Schlanger reading a greeting sent to the gathering by Helga-Zepp LaRouche.

During the concert, various *Lieder* were presented, many by Robert Schumann, such as *Du bist wie eine Blume*, *Der Himmel hat eine Träne geweint*, the full *Dichterliebe* song cycle, and four pieces from *Frauenliebe und -Leben* and *Belshazzar*; all three movements of Beethoven’s *Cello Sonata*, Op. 69 were performed; a vocal quartet presented Schumann’s *Bänkelsänger Willie* and Brahms’ *Der Abend*; the chorus presented Schumann’s *Der König in Thule*, followed by a solo singing of J.S. Bach’s *Bist du bei mir*. The entire LYM chorus closed out the first half of the program with a work which has been the pinnacle of all of the individual musical study: Mozart’s *Ave Verum Corpus*, which was followed by comments from LaRouche (see below), which were then followed by another moving performance of the *Ave Verum Corpus*.

The second part of the program began with a short pedagogical presentation by Shavin and Sigerson on

7. Lyndon LaRouche, “This Present Century: The Secret Economy’s Outlook” (this issue, p. 8).

8. David Shavin, “The Musical Soul of Scientific Creativity: Rebecca Dirichlet’s Development of the Complex Domain,” *EIR*, June 11, 2010.

Felix Mendelssohn’s *String Quartet No. 2*, Op. 13, a testament to Beethoven, along with a presentation of the first two movements of that string quartet, and more solo presentations of German *Lieder*, including Schumann’s *Die beiden Grenadiere* and *Wehmut*, Mozart’s *An Cloë*, Schubert’s *Heidenröslein* and *Litanei*. The night ended with a beautiful presentation of Brahms’ *Wie Melodien zieht es*.

The Future

It is by using this occasion of Robert Schumann’s 200th birthday, that we have opened up to ourselves an investigation of German *Lieder*, and have begun to get to know the entire network of geniuses of the German Classical period. This is a process which has only begun, and has been, and is continuing to be, an enriching experience, for all involved. The intent of the work which took place over this past week was to bring to life the presentation of poetry set to music by creative geniuses, who engaged in this work in a fight to ennoble human beings; who used their creative powers to communicate beautiful, powerful, and necessary ideas, to populations which were struggling against a European oligarchy which used ugly, bestialized popular culture to keep their subject populations under control.

In this week’s work, there were a few, unmistakable moments of true beauty which emerged—beauty in which one could almost feel the image of the ghost of the composer visiting the room for a suspended moment, and then, vanishing. These are the moments which can ennoble the soul of those participating in the process of a Classical culture.

Thus, the subject of the workshops was to take up the challenge posed by Shelley, of being able to communicate ideas, during a period of mass-strike upsurge, when the future of human civilization itself is at stake. As LaRouche said on Saturday, we have to pioneer this new way of thinking in this world, which has never really been done before in our generation, or civilization will not survive the crisis crashing upon us now. There is no use in merely talking about a Renaissance; someone must make it happen, and that is exactly what we are proving, to ourselves, that we are capable of, with this higher-level work which we all experienced over this past week.

So, let us take this inspiration of the life of Robert Schumann and his circle, and go cause some good trouble.