

FROM THE CONCERT PROGRAM

Greetings from Helga Zepp-LaRouche

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From the program of the Schiller Institute's Friedrich Schiller Birthday Celebration Concert, held at St. Bartholomew's Church in New York City on Sunday, November 18.

Thank you for the opportunity to send you a short message on the occasion of the 259th birthday of Friedrich Schiller. Schiller was convinced that one of the most important questions of his time was the aesthetical education of Man, the idea of the moral improvement through the participation in and study of great Classical art.

Now, if that was an important question during the time of Friedrich Schiller, it is so much more important today, where the trans-Atlantic world of Western Europe and the United States are in a deep moral crisis, and profound cultural collapse.

Only last week, a U.S. Marine Corps Veteran killed 12 people and wounded many others in California, but this was not an isolated event. Already this year, there have been more than 300 mass shootings in the United States. There have also been 128,000 suicides of veterans returning from wars in Afghanistan and Iraq. Obviously, all of the mass shootings and suicides have not been committed by veterans, but are increasing overall, so that all of these things taken together indicate a tragic pattern of devastation.

It is convenient, and perhaps comfortable, to merely place the blame on guns and the NRA, but if you look at cases, like that in Florida where a 15-year-old strangled his mother, disposed of the body and then staged a robbery with two friends to cover for the crime, and was gleeful about his lying 911 call, or the case in Germany where you had a group of 10-year-old children molesting another 10-year-old in the presence of four teachers who didn't even notice, one must admit that there is a very deep problem of having a depraved view of humanity.

Children in the West are bombarded by violence and pornography in their daily lives, and it is made worse by easy access to violent video games which glorify killing and destroy the normal human emotions of compassion and empathy toward other human beings. Most

movies produced today have almost no plot, but are displays of absolute barbarism, made lower than barbarism because we have arrived here from a previously more elevated state.

By contrast, Chinese President Xi Jinping in a letter exchange with eight senior professors of the Academy of Fine Arts, wrote that aesthetical education as is crucial for the mental health of the youth, because it helps to develop "beautiful minds." In China this tradition of "aesthetical education" goes all the way back to Confucius. It is interesting to consider that President Xi has stated his intent to work to eradicate poverty worldwide by 2050, and in China by 2020, while at the same time, in New York City, 114,000 public school students are homeless, and little is being done to remedy the situation.

One of Schiller's most important contributions was his emphasis on the need for the aesthetical education. And in the famous "Aesthetical Letters" he laments the depraved condition of the population of his time, and he said, "Where should this change come from, when the leading institutions are degenerate, and the masses are in a barbaric condition?" His answer: "Through Classical art."

Schiller was convinced that beauty is a necessary condition of Man, that without access to beauty, which gives him the key to the most inner movements of his soul, Man cannot fulfill his entire potential. This led him to place a heavy demand upon the artist. He said, before the artist can dare to move his audience, he must ennoble himself to the highest ideal of Mankind, and he only must talk about important, universal subjects which are able to uplift Man to the highest potential of his humanity.

It is my view that only if we reinstate a beautiful image of Man and celebrate this in the highest forms of Classical music, Classical poetry, beautiful painting, that we can get Mankind back its dignity. And therefore, at this joyful occasion of Schiller's birthday, in a very tumultuous environment, and very tumultuous situation, the world is more in need of a Classical Renaissance than ever. So join the Schiller Institute, and the chorus, and let us create a better human civilization in the near future.