
III. Making the Universe Happy

HUMAN CREATIVE POWER

The Distinctive Characteristic of the Urgently Required New Renaissance

by Janet G. West

The Schiller Institute's April 25–26 International Conference, titled "Mankind's Existence Now Depends on the Establishment of a New Paradigm!" featured four panel discussions, the third panel, reported on here, "Creativity as the Distinctive Characteristic of Human Culture: The Need for a Classical Renaissance," included a wealth of music, for which we suggest that our readers go to the [video](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=cy0uh-BYs7s) available at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=cy0uh-BYs7s>. Reports and speaker transcripts of the other panels are available in the May 1, May 8, and May 15 issues of EIR.

June 10—The Schiller panel discussion, focussing on creativity per se, had the effect of a Classical chorus, both in the musical, and the dramatic senses. Representatives of diverse backgrounds and diverse educational, political, and cultural expertise, offered in turn, provocative and elevating presentations regarding music, drama, and culture in general, and how they are intertwined with politics and economy. They all participated in "imparting and receiving profound and impassioned conceptions respecting man and nature."

Like the opening of Beethoven's *Symphony No. 2*, moderator Dennis Speed introduced the panel with a challenge to all of us, to "celebrate the idea that creativity is intelligible," and because it is intelligible, "it can be wielded against any problem faced by the human race...."

Speed asked: What if evolution was designed by the Universe to be directed by human ingenuity and creativity through musical harmony, as a more perfect mode of progress, rather than Darwinian selection? To answer that, we may be forced to give up old and ineffective axioms, embracing a new understanding of

actual human nature, upon which our species' survival may depend.

In this year of celebration of Ludwig van Beethoven's 250th birthday, we rightly celebrate the immortality of the human species, and through that, we may discover the import of our individual human existence.

The development of human creativity, Speed argued, is not only called "science," but also "music."



Schiller Institute

John Sigerson and Margaret Greenspan.

Both of these aspects of the human soul are celebrated in Beethoven's *Ninth Symphony*, based upon Friedrich Schiller's poem "An die Freude," the "Ode to Joy."

To organize and prepare the minds of the audience for the inspiring ideas to come, tenor John Sigerson, accompanied on the piano by Margaret Greenspan, opened with a performance of Beethoven's song cycle "An die ferne Geliebte" ("To the Distant Beloved"). Nothing could have been more appropriate, since we were then in the early days of the coronavirus lockdown, when so many felt boxed in, unable to be with their loved ones.

Throughout the remainder of the conference, Beethoven's haunting refrain was ever-present:

*Denn vor diesen Liedern weicht
Was geschieden uns so weit,
Und ein liebend Herz erreicht
Was ein liebend Herz geweiht!*

Then to these songs shall yield
What has kept us so far apart,
And a loving heart attains
What a loving heart has sanctified!

A video from the late, but ever-present Lyndon H. LaRouche, Jr. underscored this conception. What put him into conflict with most "experts," LaRouche explained, was his insistence that we have neglected to immerse our young people in the genius and creativity of artists such as Leonardo da Vinci, in classical music, architecture, drama—all of the noble ideas that ennoble the mind—and it is the lack of these ideas today that has deprived society of the capability to do scientific work at the level required for future human existence.

The principles of scientific endeavor and artistic expression, LaRouche has always insisted, are *identical*, and their practice is complementary: Very few genuine scientists are not also accomplished Classical musicians, or artists. It is completely natural for scientific and artistic creativity to be thus connected; it nourishes the human soul.

Music is therefore intelligible: It's hard work—but it's *intelligible*, it's communicable—and you can start with young children, teaching them to sing, and then to play beautiful music. And in that way, we can create great scientists.

Helga Zepp-LaRouche, in harmony with LaRouche's comments, presented ideas from Friedrich Schiller's *Aesthetical Letters*. Every human being, she said, has the potential to become a Beautiful Soul—*eine schöne Seele*. As Schiller defines it, a Beautiful Soul is one in whom the idea of Freedom and Necessity, Duty and Passion, are one. And the path to accomplish this—true genius—is through aes-



Schiller Institute
Helga Zepp-LaRouche

thetical education. The political situation, Schiller argued in the wake of the miserable failure of the French Revolution, can only be improved by the aesthetic education of the individual, the ennoblement of the character of the individual.

A video of the late William Warfield, renowned bass-baritone and former advisory board member of the Schiller Institute, reciting two poems by Paul Laurence Dunbar, demonstrated that one of the best methods for conveying the intelligibility of poetry is through "singing" it, not necessarily in a literal sense, but in the phrasing and emphasis.

Dr. Eugene Thamon Simpson presented a superb exposition of the development of Spirituals into art songs. When the famed Fisk Jubilee Singers, founded in 1871, toured the stages of Europe in 1873, it marked the beginnings of this transformation. Simpson recounted how Antonín Dvořák's friendship with Harry Burleigh and others during Dvořák's stay in New York City, inspired Burleigh to classically arrange a large number of Spirituals, while Dvořák himself composed his symphony, *From the New World*, with its haunting melody which later became a Spiritual in its own right, "Goin' Home."

Contrary to the attitude of many whites, who tried to shame and ridicule blacks for singing spirituals, Dvořák, and later Hall Johnson, made arrangements of hundreds of Spirituals, elevating them to art songs. More and more Classical singers demanded these arrangements, to be performed at prestigious venues in America and abroad.

Spirituals began to be developed as the basis for symphonic compositions, and Classical compositions were incorporated into Spirituals.

Be Creative: Make the Universe Happy

Schiller Institute Music Director John Sigerson presented a challenging discussion of "The Physical Power of Classical Poetry and Music." He opened with the idea that since we are in the Year of Beethoven, one of the greatest challenges as yet unresolved, is to be able to not only transmit Beethoven's music faithfully in the Classical tradition, but to surpass his most powerful



Courtesy photo
Dr. Eugene Thamon Simpson

compositions, the Late String Quartets.

It is not, as many might imagine, simply a matter of mastering the *style* of Classical music (and the case is similar for Classical poetry), but the musical expression must uplift the listener; it's not a matter of style, but of *purpose*. Our current culture is in the muck of hedonism and existentialism, and thus would-be composers of great art must be willing to submit themselves to a struggle, to shape the intended *physical effect* of their own creations.

Sigerson illustrated this point through the work of those two great musicians, Max Planck and Albert Einstein, who were, of course, also gifted theoretical physicists. As the fruit of their struggle, they discovered the quantized nature of electromagnetic energy. Although both were dissatisfied with their final theories—they struggled to reconcile the quantized and wave natures of electromagnetic energy from a higher unifying principle—that dual nature is also expressed in music, because a note is not a “thing,” but is situated in a larger geometry. How can this be?

Sigerson concluded by encouraging the young poets and composers of today (who may also be working in a scientific field), to “dedicate your life to changing your own axioms if need be, even your most cherished ones, if you find that those axioms are preventing you from discovering a means of crafting your compositions to become a physical cause in the universe. Are you, for example, certain that what you have created will, in fact, inspire action resulting in increases in the rate of growth of humanity’s relative potential population-density? Or put more simply, along with Friedrich Schiller: “Will your audience become better people as a result of experiencing your work?”

Dr. Willis Patterson, professor emeritus of voice, and former associate dean of the University of Michigan’s School of Music, Theater and Dance, spoke “On the Universality of the Folk Song, or the Presence of Classical Music in Folk Music.” The folk song can provide clarity, relief, and the need for improvement in the comfort and understanding of and with each other, especially in these perilous times.

Dr. Patterson said that Negro Spiritual-derived



Schiller Institute

John Sigerson

music, such as blues, soul, and gospel music, with its tradition of improvisation and creativity, is America’s “Classical music.” He gave a personal account as to how, as a young black man growing up, his knowledge of the history of slavery, discrimination, and segregation in America (and other so-called “developed countries” of the world) deepened and grew, through his mastery of Spirituals and work songs. His character and confidence grew with his artistic expression, informed by the suffering that affected him and many of his contemporaries. His appreciation and expertise in singing German *Lieder* also increased, and spoke to him with the same soulfulness of the Spiritual.

He urged the increased international appreciation of different cultures’ folk music—to express the ideas of Friedrich Schiller’s “Ode to Joy.”

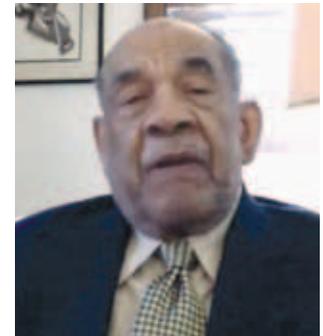
Aesthetics Transform Politics

Teng Ji Meng, Professor of American Studies at Beijing Foreign Studies University, began his presentation by discussing a letter sent by China’s President Xi Jinping to eight professors teaching Chinese aesthetics at the Central Academy of Fine Arts, in which Xi emphasized several important notions, the two most important being Virtue and Art, but also including patriotism and altruism.

In China, Professor Teng said, this aesthetic education, particularly the emphasis on Virtue, has been very deeply rooted in the Chinese school curriculum, from primary schools to the universities.

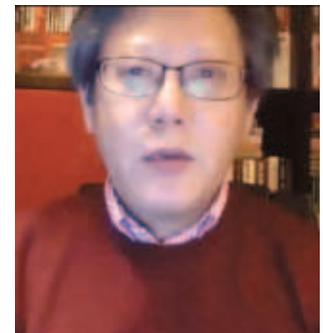
By Virtue is meant having the ability and the skill-set to communicate, to be compassionate, and to love one’s people. And, by Art is meant the art of meaningful connection of people with their community, their ruler, and the world beyond.

Another important value, he said, is that of Altruism. China has expressed this in its relations with other



Schiller Institute

Dr. Willis Patterson



Schiller Institute

Teng Ji Meng

nations: In the 1960s, China was already exporting food, medical teams, and engineers to many countries in Africa, which helped to mitigate the spread of malaria and to build up infrastructure like railroads.

China has also been committed to the Confucian principle of saving lives, especially in giving deep respect to the elderly, and in healing people afflicted with the coronavirus as quickly as possible.

Professor Teng concluded by reiterating that these Confucian ideals translate into contemporary Chinese politics, and into President Xi's commitment to a world in which we work together for the commonly shared future of all mankind.

Diane Sare and Leah deGruchy

Diane Sare, founder of the Schiller Institute NYC [Chorus](#), and Leah deGruchy, wrapped up this wide-ranging panel with a presentation “On the Employment of Chorus in Politics.”

What is the nature of government? If we are a government “of the people,” then why doesn't our government function properly? And what is the standard for “functioning properly”? What has happened to our understanding of who we are as human beings, that individuals feel alienated from mankind, and that they have lost their sense of the relationship of mankind to the Universe? We must begin by looking at the shortcomings within ourselves.

To address these questions, deGruchy presented a novel and insightful analysis of the famous scene from William Shakespeare's *The Merchant of Venice*, in which Shylock demands his “pound of flesh” in payment for a bond. Portia enters the scene, as the Classic Chorus, in her soliloquy, “The quality of mercy is not strained...” (both in Act 4, Scene 1). This challenges the audience to resolve a horrific *legal* demand of a penalty of a “pound of flesh” from a higher principle.

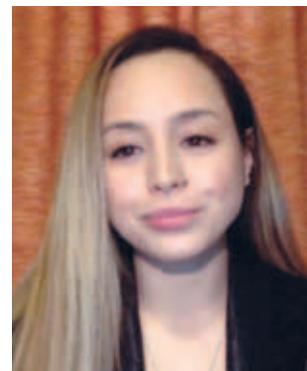
This notion of a higher principle, Sare followed up, is found in Schiller's concept of the role of the Chorus in great drama: It must transport us from the actual, to the possible. The Chorus can lift us up above the deeply tragic and emotional dramas played out daily with the deaths and suffering from the coronavirus, so that the mind is still free to act, and not simply react or become overwhelmed.

This notion was intertwined with the concept of mercy in a beautiful and profound way: that one cannot expect mercy without giving it; that in asking for mercy, we show the most profound strength—a strength which is often confused with weakness, namely humility.



Schiller Institute

Diane Sare



Schiller Institute

Leah deGruchy

Through humility, we learn patience and compassion for the failings of ourselves, and of our fellow man; and in extending mercy, we uplift those around us to be better than their destiny.

In the musical Chorus, such as in Beethoven's masses, we see the development of an idea through the dialogue between the chorus and soloists. To assist in invoking the quality of mercy in the participant, the mass begins with “Kyrie eleison”—“Lord, have mercy!”

In conclusion, Sare asserted that we must be able to bring this beauty to audiences, thereby enabling them to participate in the immortality of mankind, if we are to overcome the current crises.

The Future

A Greeting was received from Gregory Hopkins, tenor and music director of the Harlem Opera Theater and a long-time collaborator of the Schiller Institute. He recounted some of his personal history, and how Schiller had both enriched his life and his sense of identity as an artist. He concluded by identifying the elevation of the Spiritual as the root of all American music.

In her closing remarks, Helga Zepp-LaRouche urged each and all to try something new, to try addressing another person's creative mentality, and work to bring out what is best in that person. You must never just react to someone with, “Oh, I can't stand that person,” rather, you have to transform your emotions toward a higher degree of *agapē*, of love for what is really human in the individual. She told the audience, “Therefore, I think the question of *agapē*—and mercy is a derivative of *agapē*—is something one can decide. I just would like to leave it at that; we can debate it at some other time. But I'm absolutely certain that if we want to make a cultural renaissance, we have to turn on our *agapē*.”