

## II. Culture

# Music for Peace— A Perspective from the Universe

by Philip Ulanowsky

March 28—Civilization has long known that even the most difficult conflicts can be enduringly resolved when participants rise above the fog of fear and ordinary concerns in order to see each other and approach the problems from the clearer perspective of their common humanity. Among the best vehicles out of murkiness is music. Those old enough to recall the 1989 fall of the Berlin Wall, which had divided East from West for 38 years of the Cold War, may recall how many Classical and other musicians gave free concerts in celebration. Today, as we stare into the opening jaws of the nuclear annihilation being



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*Signe Fribo Jeppesen, soprano, at the Music for Peace concert in the Thalkirche (Church in the Valley), Wiesbaden-Sonnenberg, Germany, March 16.*

pushed by frightened and enraged circles in NATO, with the appearance that our fate is sealed, music once again serves to elevate the viewpoint of audiences to a higher realm.

On the initiative of a political organizer of Albanian heritage in Denmark, a small, free concert was given on March 16 in Wiesbaden, Germany—a country otherwise known for the Ramstein military base. Under the heading “Music for Peace,”

Feride Istogu-Gillesberg assembled a group of committed musicians to present both instrumental and vocal selections of music from Albania, Denmark, Sweden, Germany, Italy, Austria, Russia, and Ukraine. Originally planned for Stuttgart, the concert had to be moved to the charming Thalkirche Wiesbaden-Sonnenberg, but found a warm reception.

The program announced,

In a world that has come apart at the seams, a dialogue between different nations marks an important ray of hope that unites people through beauty and reminds them that we are all part of the common human family and can enrich each other through the beauty of different cultures. Art, and music in particular, is a universal language that speaks



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*Soprano Feride Istogu-Gillesberg accompanied by Adeline Ushaku Hashani.*

to the heart and opens our souls to beauty.

German translations of the song lyrics were read first, with the wry comment that “international understanding is easier when you know what the other person is talking about.” Though this has not moved many national and other leaders to ascend from their ideological entrenchments in recent years, wings of song lifted the concert’s participants.

The audience was treated to a wide scope of music by an international group of performers. Violin Sonata in F major by George Frideric Handel; three Albanian folk songs; Trio Sonata VIII by Arcangelo Corelli for two violins and piano; Ludwig van Beethoven’s arrangement of the Ukrainian folk song *Schöne Minka*; two Danish songs by Lizzie Fribo Jeppesen and the Swedish *Freds-sang* (Peace Song); the *Adagio* movement from Johann Sebastian Bach’s Concerto for Two Violins; a Ukrainian folk song; two Russian songs, one by Fribo Jeppesen and one by Sergei Rachmaninov after a poem by Heinrich Heine from his *Book of Songs*; the serenade from Joseph Haydn’s “Serenade Quartet”; two German folk songs set by Johannes Brahms; and finally, the lively *Only One Globe*, another composition by Fribo Jeppesen, this one in English. To conclude the evening, the performers and their



*Feride Istogu-Gillesberg, soprano.*

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friends invited everyone to join in singing the lovely canon (round) *Dona Nobis Pacem* (Grant Us Peace).

Istogu-Gillesberg, a soprano, was joined by soprano Signe Fribo Jeppesen (the composer’s daughter); pianists Werner Hartmann and Adelina Ushaku Hashani; violinist Caroline Hartmann; and Claudio Celani, who sang and also played violin, viola, and guitar as called for!

According to one participant, “The audience was enthusiastic, and the unanimous opinion of those involved was that the experiment was a success and could serve as a model for further events of this kind.” An outbreak of others would undoubtedly be welcomed, not as an entertaining escape from harsh realities, but to give voice to the cry for peace.



*Violinists Claudio Celani and Caroline Hartmann.*

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