III. Actions for Peace

Schiller Institute NYC Chorus, Sept. 14

Concert for the Victims of War

by Jen Pearl and John Scialdone

Sept. 19—On Sunday, Sept. 14, 2025, the Schiller Institute New York City Chorus (sinycchorus.com) delivered a glorious and solemn performance in honor of the victims of the September 11, 2001 terrorist attacks. Since 2016, the Schiller NYC Chorus has presented a 9/11 memorial concert every year in remembrance of the precious lives that were lost on that day, lost in the aftermath, and those lives that have been lost in the endless wars since then. The program, entitled "9/11 Ceremonial Concert: Luigi Cherubini *Requiem* for the Victims of War," was thorough-composed, drawing the audience in as silent but active participants from beginning to end.

Along with Cherubini's powerful yet humble *Requiem*, two African American spirituals were performed, along with a trombone quartet by Ludwig van Beethoven, who greatly admired Cherubini as a composer. Beethoven regarded Cherubini as his greatest contemporary composer, and indeed requested the Cherubini *Requiem* for his own funeral:

> Among all composers alive, Cherubini is the most worthy of respect. I am in complete agreement, too, with his conception of the Requiem.

Notably, both the Cherubini *Requiem* and Beethoven's *Drei Equali* for trombone quartet were performed at Beethoven's funeral in 1827.

As Jen Pearl, chair of the Chorus, stated, "Our mission is to promote peace through the universal language of Classical music. As our namesake, Friedrich Schiller, said, 'it is through beauty that one proceeds to free-

EIRNS/Suzanne Klebe

Maestro John Sigerson conducting Schiller Institute NYC Chorus and orchestra performance of Luigi Cherubini's Requiem.

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dom.' In other words, our best selves are evoked and uplifted when we participate in the beautiful." Mrs. Pearl greeted the audience, and continued to guide the audience through the program transitions, moving seamlessly between speakers and music.

Jude Martell

Maestro John Sigerson after a moment's silence following the performance of Luigi Cherubini's Requiem.

FDNY Joins in Commemoration

At the outset, the Fire Department of New York Ceremonial Unit marched to the front and presented the colors. The audience stood as FDNY firefighter Regina Wilson sang *The Star Spangled Banner* a cappella, and remained standing as the Color Guard marched out and FDNY Chaplain Fr. Fred Pellegrini gave the invocation. Fr. Pellegrini emphasized the role of music in bringing people together: "When human voices come together, so do our hearts. Where there is harmony there is unity, there is beauty, there is hope. And humbly we realize we need this beauty, this hope, for they are the impetus to action, to outreach for those who struggle. Let our thoughts seek good and help those who struggle emotionally, spiritually, let time never lessen the impact of that day, protect all, give wisdom to our leaders that they make decisions to prevent another day such as 9/11, banish from earth the darkness that allows hatred to grow." The audience joined in the Chaplain's Amen and sat to hear the remarks of International Schiller Institute spokesman Dennis Speed.

We Remember, that We Might Develop

"This is a time of great turbulence," said Speed. "In a time like this, it is necessary for those who realize that something is wrong with all of us, to pose a new standard or goal for ourselves, a new dispensation." He described the essence of Schiller Institute founder Helga Zepp-LaRouche's "*Ten Principles of a New International Security and Development Architecture*." "The basic assumption for the new paradigm is, that man is fundamentally good and capable to infinitely perfect the creativity of his mind and the beauty of his soul, and being the most advanced geological force in the universe, which proves that the lawfulness of the mind and that of the physical universe are in correspondence and cohesion, and that all evil is the result of a lack of development, and therefore can be overcome."

Jude Martell

Fire Department of New York Ceremonial Unit presenting the colors.

Jude Martell

Becky Rossman, CEO of Tuesday's Children.

Mrs. LaRouche proposed her Ten Principles, Speed explained, to spark discussion, provoke disagreement and reconciliation, because she believes, as Schiller said in his drama *Don Carlos*, "a purpose which higher reason hath conceived, 10,000 times defeated, should never be abandoned." "We need creative non-violent direct action," said Speed. "Harriet Tubman said, 'I freed 1,000 slaves, but could have freed 1,000 more if I had been able to show them they were slaves.' Are we slaves to violence? Are we slaves to destruction? Beethoven didn't think so. 'If people understood my music there would be no wars,' he said."

Luigi Cherubini

Speed's remarks were followed by the music of Beethoven: *Drei Equali* or *Three Equals*, a set of three pieces composed in 1812 for All Souls Day. The genre of the Equale, or Aequale, usually short pieces for trombone choirs, is used for funerals and other commemorative occasions. It was prevalent in 18th- and 19th-Century Germany and Austria. All voices play an equal part, thus equals. Two of Beethoven's three *Equali* were performed during his funeral procession in 1827, with four trombone players and 16 male singers. In listening to this somber and pensive work, the audience had occasion to reflect on the messages of the preceding voices.

Tuesday's Children

The featured speaker of the evening, Becky Rossman, CEO of Tuesday's Children, spoke next. Tuesday's Children is a nonprofit organization forged in the aftermath of 9/11 that provides community and resilience-building programs for military families of the fallen and those directly affected by the events of September 11. Since its founding, Tuesday's Children has expanded to serve Gold Star families who have experienced post-9/11 military service losses across the nation. With a mission centered on turning pain into purpose, the organization honors the legacies of those lost by supporting families navigating traumatic loss through community-building with a focus on post-traumatic growth.

Rossman joined Tuesday's Children as Chief Executive Officer during a pivotal time of national expansion. A U.S. Army Reserve veteran, with more than 25 years of nonprofit experience, she has taken the helm at the organization as it works to significantly both broaden its reach and impact across the country, while "Keeping the Promise" to the 9/11 community by ensuring the services remain relevant and meaningful.

Recognizing the significance of the nation's approaching 250th anniversary, Ms. Rossman wanted to also speak not only of the America we celebrate, but of the America we became on 9/12, of the selfless sacrifices of first responders, of no red states or blue states, no hyphenated identities. "We were simply Americans. Individuals lining up to give blood, lighting lamps on our front porches, and looking into the eyes of strangers with compassion and determination."

As she ended her talk, the chorus rose and sang the first spiritual, "Listen to the Lambs," as if it were a continuation of what had just preceded it. This anthem, composed by Nathaniel Dett in 1914, is both mournful and hopeful. The "lambs a'crying" are the downtrodden and suffering souls in need of a shepherd who has been taken from them, and we are called to listen and care for those less fortunate than ourselves.

Following the second spiritual, "Daniel, Daniel," as the orchestra began to assemble in their seats, distinguished 95-year-old activist Father Harry Bury, a

Minneapolis-based activist for peace and non-violence over many decades, was asked to stand in the audience and say a few words.

Cherubini

This second invocation, combined with the preceding remarks and musical offerings, properly prepared the audience for the main work of the evening, Cherubini's *Requiem*.

Born in 1760 in Italy, but spending most of his career in Paris, Maria Luigi Carlo Zenobio Salvatore Cherubini was four years younger than Wolfgang Mozart, and ten years older than Ludwig van Beethoven. During his long life, Cherubini was a prolific and influential composer of Classical works, beginning with heroic operas composed during the tumultuous 1790s, and later turning largely to religious music. Beethoven was a great admirer of Cherubini's operas, such as the "rescue opera" *Lodoïska*, whose leading character was named Floreska, which certainly reminds one of the character Florestan in Beethoven's own rescue opera, *Fidelio*.

Over the years, many great composers, including Felix Mendelssohn, Robert Schumann, and Johannes Brahms had nothing but praise for Cherubini's works. As Mendelssohn wrote in 1839: "And old Cherubini? There is a man for you! I have got his *Abencérages* [a three-act opera composed in 1813], and am again and again enjoying his sparkling fire, his clever and unexpected transitions, and the neatness and grace with which he writes. I am truly grateful to this fine old gentleman. It is all so free, so bold and bright."

And Schumann around the same time wrote that, "[T]o this day, at his advanced age, superior as a harmonist to all his contemporaries, the refined, scholarly, interesting Italian whose severe reserve and strength of character sometimes leads me to compare him with Dante."

There is nothing more fitting to reflect and honor the departed than the powerful words of the *Requiem Mass* put to the gripping music of Luigi Cherubini. The unity of effect building throughout the work, right to the conclusion, creates an almost frightening finality, with the entire chorus at the end staying on the single tone of C for over a page of music, maintaining an enormous tension.

Indeed, when the audible music ended, a minute of silence was observed, which seemed part of the composition. And, it was during the moment of silence that the entire experience became one indescribable idea as if in a simultaneous reflection of everything that had just happened in the last 100 minutes.

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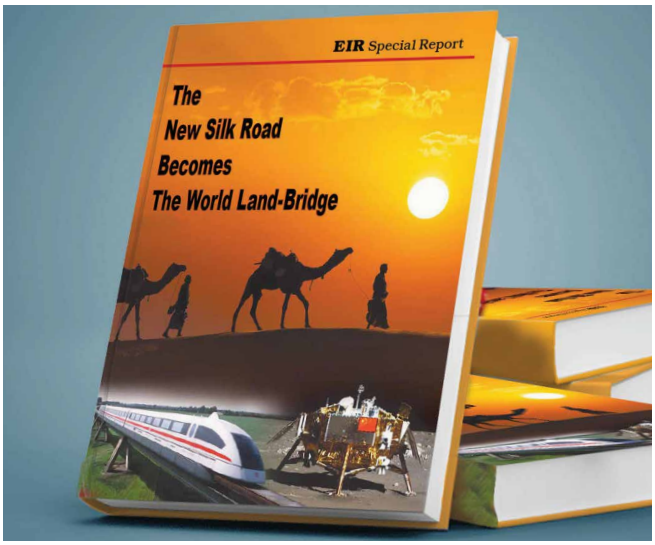

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