

### III. Music and Culture

# The Schiller Institute NYC Chorus and the Joy of Being Human

by John Scialdone

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May 9—The international Schiller Institute has always, since its founding in 1984, stressed the central importance of Classical music for locating and developing the intrinsic creative and *agapic* nature of being human. On January 19, 2014, the Schiller Institute and friends held a “Remembrance of President John F. Kennedy” [concert](#) at the Cathedral of the Holy Cross in Boston, Massachusetts. It was exactly 50 years after a [Memorial Mass](#) had been held at the same location on January 19, 1964, at the request of Jacqueline Kennedy. On both occasions, the Mass held in 1964 and the memorial in 2014, the Mozart *Requiem* was performed. Indeed, the tenor soloist for the 1964 service, Nicholas di Virgilio, presented his recollections to the 2014 memorial concert, which featured audio excerpts of many of JFK’s speeches between movements of the *Requiem*.

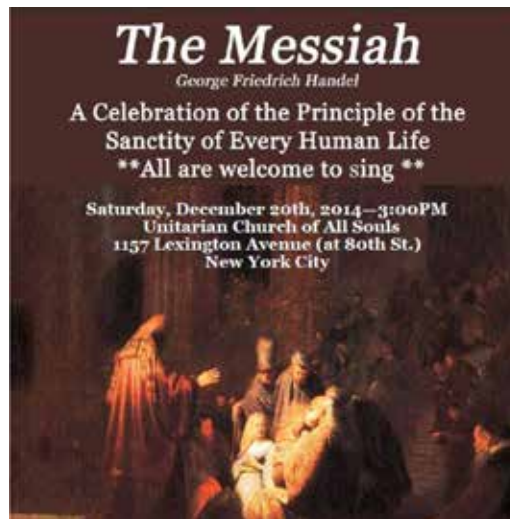
The year 2014 was a time of increasing violence and injustice in the nation and the world, from Iraq and Afghanistan to Ferguson, Missouri and Brooklyn, New York. On December 20 of that year, what would soon become the Schiller Institute NYC Community Chorus came into being spontaneously at the initiative of Schiller Institute organizer Diane Sare, in an attempt to

prevent a violent response to such injustice from overtaking New York City as well—not through opposing that violence physically—but by inspiring people to find the “better angels of their nature” through the reason and beauty of Classical music.

An impromptu sing-along concert of George Friedrich Handel’s oratorio *Messiah* was held in Manhattan, on very short notice, dedicated to “A Celebration of the Principle of the Sanctity of Every Human Life.” The event was organized in a matter of days, with no planning beforehand for orchestra, chorus, or soloists, but with an open invitation that “all are welcome to sing.” Adding to the challenge of quickly finding instrumentalists who would participate, the concert was performed at the proper Verdi tuning of A = 432 Hertz.

#### Today’s Mission

Today the mission continues. The most recent concert by the Schiller Institute NYC Chorus was held on April 16 in Manhattan, at the St. Paul & St. Andrew Methodist Church, as the concluding event of a two-day, four-panel international (online) conference sponsored by the Schiller Institute. That [conference](#) was titled, “Without the Development of All Nations, There Can Be No Lasting Peace for the Planet.” The 61-voice chorus, 16-member orchestra, and 6 soloists presented a profound program which included spirituals, music from Argentina, China and



Schiller Institute NYC Chorus

*The December 2014 concert featuring Handel’s Messiah. The Schiller Institute NYC Chorus, New York City.*



Schiller Institute NYC Chorus

Megan Dobrodt conducts the Schiller Institute NYC Chorus in a performance of Handel's *Messiah* in New York City, April 16, 2023. "Man is fundamentally good and capable of infinitely perfecting the creativity of his mind and the beauty of his soul."

Russia, and which featured a major part of Handel's *Messiah*, introduced by remarks by David Shavin. [See the Program, and those remarks, which follow immediately in this issue.]

The name for this April 16 Schiller Institute con-

cert, "Let Us Have Peace," comes to us from General Ulysses Grant at the end of the Civil War. It is inscribed in stone above the entrance to his, and his wife Julia's, final resting place alongside the Hudson River in Manhattan. Inside the mausoleum there is a



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Ulysses S. Grant's tomb alongside the Hudson River in Manhattan. The inscription over the entrance reads, "Let Us Have Peace." A mural inside depicts the opposing generals, Grant and Robert E. Lee, shaking hands at Appomattox, ending the War of the Rebellion.



EIRNS/Stuart Lewis

*That humankind is “the most advanced geological force in the universe proves the correspondence and cohesion of the human mind and the physical universe.” Here, another view of Megan Dobrodt conducting the April 16 performance of Handel’s Messiah by the Schiller Institute NYC Chorus.*

mural on the wall above the tombs, depicting Generals Grant and Lee shaking hands at Appomattox. This after over a half million Americans perished in the fratricidal war.

People often ask how something so destructive could happen. We do not have to be reminded that yet another fratricidal war has been ignited today. Is mankind destined to suffer such conflicts for all time? Are these different wars, or is it one continuous war against civilization itself, like an endemic disease infecting mankind, which is activated repeatedly throughout history by an oligarchical force determined to keep humanity down and subservient through bestialization?

St. Augustine once wrote that war is not a question of the particulars of any time, but a question of the human soul:

The real evils in war are love of violence, revengeful

cruelty, fierce and implacable enmity, wild resistance, the lust of power, and such like.

St. Augustine believed that the only *just* reason to go to war was the desire for peace:

Be peaceful, therefore in warring, so that you



Schiller Institute NYC Chorus

*“All evil is the result of a lack of beauty and development, and can therefore be overcome.” Here, Costas Tsourakis sings a bass aria in the Messiah, performed by the Schiller Institute NYC Chorus and orchestra, New York City, April 16, 2023.*

may vanquish those whom you war against, and bring them to *the prosperity of peace*.

This is reflected clearly in Abraham Lincoln’s conclusion to his [second inaugural address](#), one month before the above mentioned surrender:

With malice toward none, with charity for all, with firmness in the right as God gives us to see the right, let us strive on to finish the work we are in to bind up the nation’s wounds, to care for him who shall have borne the battle and for his widow and his orphan—to do all which may achieve and cherish a just and lasting peace among ourselves and with all nations.

As we stare at the threat of total war physically engulfing our planet today, how is this to be done?

In 1967, Pope Paul VI, in his encyclical, *Populorum Progressio*, stated that “the new name for peace is development.” (He had also attempted to mediate in the Spring of 1945 an early conclusion to the global war, but was thwarted by those who wanted to prolong

the war while nuclear weapons were being prepared for the ultimate act of terror.)

Helga Zepp-LaRouche, founder of the Schiller Institute, in her “[Ten Principles](#) of a New Security and Development Architecture,” issued in November 2022, wrote:

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.

Therefore, as President Kennedy stated in his [inaugural address](#), let us now vanquish the real enemies of mankind: “tyranny, poverty, disease, and war itself,” and thus, shepherded by the beauty of Classical art, bring the “prosperity of peace” to all the nations of the world.

## Schiller Institute NYC Chorus Concert: ‘Let Us Have Peace’

*This is an abridged listing of the concert program, “Let Us Have Peace,” performed by the Schiller Institute NYC Chorus, with orchestra, April 16, 2023, at the St. Paul & St. Andrew Methodist Church in New York City. The full program is available [here](#) on the [sinycchorus.com](#) website. Board Members Diane Sare and Megan Dobrodt conducted Parts 1 and 2, respectively. David Shavin delivered remarks on the Messiah before Part 2 (see his accompanying article).*

### Program

<i>Misa Criolla: Kyrie</i> Ariel Ramirez (Argentina)	Opus 4 No. 4 (Russia) Sergei Rachmaninoff/Alexander Pushkin
<i>Ezekiel Saw De Wheel</i> Negro Spiritual, arr. by Harry Burleigh (U.S.)	<i>Oboe Sonata in G minor, Andante</i> J.S. Bach (Germany)
<i>When I Was Sinkin’ Down</i> Old American Hymn, arr. by Hall Johnson (U.S.)	Part II
<i>The Sycamore Tree</i> Traditional Folk Song (China)	<i>Messiah</i> Oratorio George Frideric Handel/Charles Jennens
<i>Sing Not to Me, Beautiful Maiden, Your Sad Song!</i>	Parts II and III, from “Behold the Lamb of God” (No. 22) to the concluding “Amen” (No. 53)