



An Exercise in Compassion

History

Paintings inspired by the writings of Credo Mutwa, by Slava Richter (d.2006), a Russian piano teacher at Roedean who settled in South Africa with her family.

MADONNA AFRICA IN AIDS ARMAGEDDON

Images were donated to RFTL by Slava's husband.



Beneficiaries

The current beneficiary of RFTL is a replicable prototype garden called the **Siyakhana Food Garden Permaculture Project**.

This is a WITS University Health Department initiative which is educational and entrepreneurial, supporting the needy in the inner city of Johannesburg, of which the main purpose is to address the needs of food-insecure children and adults living with HIV/AIDS.

RFTL and Siyakhana are long-term projects with far-reaching consequences locally and abroad.

Skills training and job creation in self-sustainable, replicable programmes receive constant attention, so this investment in human development can bear fruit by expanding into further projects across the country as part of a national food security initiative.





Patrons

Archbishop Emeritus Desmond Tutu

Desmond Tutu's historic accomplishments -- and his continuing efforts to promote peace in the world -- were formally recognised by the United States in 2009, when President Barack Obama named him to receive the nation's highest civilian honour, the Presidential Medal of Freedom.

Dr Mimi Coertse

Durban-born, she completed her schooling at the Helpmekaar Hoër Meisieskool in Johannesburg. She studied in Vienna at the Academy for Art and Science and made her debut at the Vienna State Opera in January 1955 as the first flower girl in Wagner's Parsifal at the Teatro San Carlo in Naples. This was the beginning of a career that would earn her recognition for flawlessly performing the most difficult works all over the world.

Requiem for the Living

Composed by Rexleigh Bunyard

Conducted by Rick Muselaers

Soloists

Claudia Pike~ Mezzo Soprano

Olusegun Soyemi~ Counter Tenor Call singer

James Venables~ Treble

or Ryan Hoffmann~ Treble

Bernard Boekkooi ~ Baritone

Praise Singers

Coached by Avril Cummins

Hebrew~ Dillon Davie

English~ Bernard Boekkooi

Venda~ Mukgadi Sathekge

French~Julia Kinghorn

German~Victoria Roetger

Setswana~ Kamogelo Mothoagae

Afrikaans~ Tylo Neethling

isiXhosa~Fumane Moeketsi

Sesotho~ Phenye Modiane

Hindi~ Thirusha Govender

Cantonese and Mandarin~ Layla Li

Portuguese – Jacinta Demetrio

isiZulu~ Fumane Moeketsi

Orchestra

Violin 1

- 1 Camelia Onea
- 2 Viara Markova
- 3 Elbe Roberts
- 4 Olga Korvink
- 5 Jacques Fourie
- 6 Elena Slatkova
- 7 Katrien Jooste
- 8 Adri Scholtz

Violin 2

- 1 Leonie Greyling
- 2 Kabelo Mothlomi
- 3 Libbie Du Toit
- 4 Isabella Roux
- 5 Bernard Madumo
- 6 Davina Gordon
- 7 Hana Yim
- 8 Candice Martin

Viola

- 1 Vladimir Ivanov
- 2 Elmarie Van Der Vyver
- 3 Violeta Miljkovic
- 4 Esther Spies
- 5 Martie Botha
- 6 Judith Klins

Cello

- 1 Berthine Van Schoor
- 2 Peta-ann Richardson
- 3 Susan Mouton
- 4 Katia Sokolova
- 5 Daliwonga Tshangela
- 6 Maren Du Plessis

Double Bass

- 1 Christi-louise Swanepoel
- 2 Regomoditswe Thothela
- 3 Cecilia Kriegler

Flute 1 & Pic

Malane Hofmeyr-burger

Flute 2

Khanyisile Mthetwa

Clarinet 1 & E-flat

Lizet Smith

Clarinet 2

Anthony Cloete

Orchestra

Alto Sax
Matthew Lombard

Bassoon
Arno Steyn

Contra Bassoon
Brahm Henkins

Oboe
Lesley Stansell

Horn 1
Shannon Armer

Horn 2
Frikkie Leroux

Trumpet & Piccolo
Donald Bouwer

Trumpet 2
Phil Cox

Trombone 1
Justin Sassman

Trombone 2
Etienne Mcloen

Harp
Gaylen Sales

Perc
Magda De Vries
Dolf Van Dyk
Matthew Downey
Gerben Grooten

Piano/ Celesta
Anneke Lamont

PROGRAMME NOTES page 1

LIBERA ME
&
NONCREDO

Libera me means “Free me” ...”and I have added...from the limitations of my own humanity”. This is a call to come alive to new possibilities, to die to our old ways and ultimately be renewed by the transcendent power of the Christian faith to a state of trust and love.

Bells and vibraphone (like echoing church bells) set the scene for a mezzo-soprano impassioned prayer for personal liberation (from prejudice, doubt, distrust, despair, narrow vision – anything which reduces our compassion and understanding). Bells have been used in religious rituals for centuries. They called the faithful to prayer, were used to drive off evil spirits, warn citizens of imminent attack, notify the community of weddings, births and deaths. Here they focus the psyche through the ear by targeting one main pitch area, B natural, around which the melodic and harmonic elements are built.

The choral close harmony support has an element of reflective ritual chant in outer sections. Contrasting agitated bursts from soloist and choir follow a flowing musical mirror. This symbolizes the mirror of existence in which we see ourselves reflected only partially for now.

PROGRAMME NOTES page 2

Interleaved with the *Libera Me 1 and 2* is the *Noncredo 1 and 2*. Hence: *Libera me 1, Noncredo 1, Libera Me 2 and Noncredo 2*.

The traditional Christian *Credo* is an expression of faith in the tenets of the religion.

The *Noncredo* is not a statement of non-faith. Rather, it reveals the consequences of fear and lovelessness, i.e. of our lack of faith. Hence the text : “In our fear and lovelessness, it is clear that we do not believe in God.....and (the result of this fear and lovelessness is that) we have created hell on Earth”.

In the *Noncredo*, a large choral-orchestral tutti reflects in musical repetitiveness and overlays of sameness, the harshness of clashing pitch and percussive abruptness, the rigidity and stuckness, the relentless ferocity of non-caringness, of non-doing, which inflicts as much hurt as deliberately damaging actions and attitudes. An extract from Psalm 19 (“the gods whom Earth holds sacred are all worthless and those that run after them find trouble without end”) leads us to the *Crucifixus*.

CRUCIFIXUS

The *Crucifixus* takes its symbology from the Christian biblical description of Good Friday.

“A vision of hell, a world where there is no love has only cruelty, pain, loneliness“ sings the mezzo-soprano sinuously in this slow “sarabande” a stately dance of Moorish/Spanish origin in triple meter which lends itself to the inclusion of references to Ravel’s dance of life and death orchestral *Bolero*.

Here the pedal point and repeated harmonic structure anchors the plaintive melodic descent of the celeste. Choral voices depict the horror and suffering of violence and war, supporting the soloist. “we of little faith in truth and love have created hell”, they moan in distress. The painful pace echoes a man staggering up the hill to Golgotha, place of the skull, the *omphalos* (navel) of the world.

We observe events unfolding in a symbolic universe where modernity has generated the invention of the secular by rejecting the participation between the immanent and the transcendent (natural and supernatural) worlds which preceded it. When the transcendent and immanent aspects of life no longer participate in one another, there is no meaning in life and nihilism results.

PROGRAMME NOTES page 4

Although not literally or consistently a chaconne with a repeated harmonic framework like J.S.Bach's *Crucifixus* from the B Minor Mass, the repetitive intent of this *Crucifixus* is similar, serving to accentuate the agony and nightmare of hanging from a cross in pursuit of healing.

Spiritual experiences of death and rebirth communicate a process of becoming whole through sacrifice.

Sacrificial dismemberment, death and rebirth are ritual steps of a transmutation process undergone by ritual shamans from archaic times even to this day. What we call "religion" evolved through a series of stages :

- i) Archaic stage _ shamans, medicine men and sages
- ii) Ancient civilizations – prophets, physicians and priests
- iii) Christian heritage – mystics, theologians and philosophers

The cross represents the dilemma (crisis) of re-uniting the vertical (spiritual) with the horizontal (physical) planes of existence – the resolution of the opposites.

“We crucify life each day, inflicting our own wounded consciousness on all around us. As Christ suffered and died on behalf of his enemies, our hearts must suffer a crisis of faith” advocates the choir for the sake of our own transformation from hell-creators to healed ones , in the style of priests intoning liturgical text, later overlaid by the soloist in the countermelody, supported by trumpet.

PROGRAMME NOTES page 5

Upper woodwind and later piccolo trumpet sustain a broad countermelody, over the harmonic pattern.. Horns and trombone murmur the underlying harmonies insistently while pitched percussion and woodwind subside chromatically in layered waves, as if sighing and lamenting. The harp attempts brief passages of delicate ascent supported by pizzicati across the string section. Snare and violins outline a familiar rhythm reminiscent of *Bolero*, with added textural layers leading to the climax immediately preceding the *Dies Irae*.

DIES IRAE

In the fiery *Dies Irae* large orchestral-choral forces wrestle furiously with the spirits of old rage and misery - subterranean toxic forces within the psyche and within a civilization.causing havoc.

The text is traditional Latin, translated into old English:

Days of wrath and doom impending
Heav'n and earth in ashes ending
Oh what fear man's bosom rendeth
When from heav'n the judge descendeth
On whose sentence all dependeth
Wondrous sound the trumpet flingeth
Through earth's sepulchres
All before the throne it bringeth.

PROGRAMME NOTES page 6

This movement follows on immediately after the *Crucifixus*, using the same notes in the same instrumentation with which this section of the Requiem concluded, still in spacious 3/2.

It proceeds in Ligetian fashion with very long notes gradually fading and shifting, until the motive introducing the diabolical dance in 6/8 emerges spikily from the depths in the 'celli and contrabass.

Viola and harp harmonics provide the moment of calm before the storm in an eerie tritone over a timp roll.

Then all hell breaks loose in the choir, strings and brass. More uneasy calm follows. Xylophone and upper strings *col legno* hint at the psychic skeletons about to be revealed. A second outburst adds a jittery jig on piano, skeletons gather momentum in *spiccato* and then, trouble in earnest begins to develop. Interjections from the trumpets, snare, xylophone and harp punctuate the high choral descending chromatic shrieks and wails. Woodwind including piccolo and E flat clarinet and lower strings join in the jig.

Overlaid text in English and Latin ominously combines the opening *Dies Irae* powerful choral motive and the jig outline, with piano and flute introducing the “dominant” version of the jig. That this dance is jinxed is confirmed a moment later when solo violin 1 enters playing *scordatura* (the devil's violin) with a string trio which emerges intermittently between *tutti* turmoils.

PROGRAMME NOTES page 7

Slower and quicker renderings of the text of wrath and doom alternate with the jig settings. The choir awaits the judge's sentence *sotto voce*, before being interrupted by strident woodwind trills and stabbing brass depicting the trumpets resounding through earth's sepulchres. Lower choral voices take over the chromatic descent while the jig frolics frothily in the uppers, until the orchestral body takes on the final battle of shaking the imprisoned soul asunder, breaking the bonds of the past.

LACRYMOSA : KYRIE ELEISON

The title of this movement comes from the word for a tear, *lacrima*. The movement is a recognition of Mozart's contribution to the requiem literature and employs a much smaller, more intimate musical ensemble than the *Dies Irae*, including saxophone and mbira. Under the title stands "to be or not to be", a fragment of text from Shakespeare's play, *Hamlet*. This is fragile moment and the turning point of the Requiem, the moment when the embattled soul decides to live.

Using my own text overlaid with the (Greek) ritual prayer from the mass : *Kyrie Eleison/Christe Eleison* (God have mercy, Christ have mercy), and an oblique reference to Christ's words on the cross ("Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do"), the *Lacrymosa* is built up from fragments of a melodic idea (culminating in a full version in harp and celeste), and a fragmented harmonic idea (vocal quartet and choir)

PROGRAMME NOTES page 8

which gradually reaches a climax in the stretto section and then subsides, resembling a storm building up, breaking and then resolving.

Watery-windy images of streaming, dripping, sighing etc. are conveyed in the swirling string harmonics, vibraphone, glockenspiel, harp, celeste, pizzicato interjections, mbira figurations and temple block rhythm. Woodwind including alto saxophone lyrically complement the strings and percussion.

The fragments coming together as a whole and in diminution (celeste and vibraphone over harp) symbolize healing brought about by the prayer for forgiveness, the return of flexibility (after the rigidity of rage exposed in the *Dies Irae*), and the ability of the psychic layers to flow freely in the wholeness of several simultaneous dimensions.

Of all the Requiem sections, this is the most exacting vocally with regard to maintaining exact pitch in close harmony against the orchestral melodic strands.

PROGRAMME NOTES page 9

Vocal quartet and choir : text

Tears (*kyrie*)

Streaming

Kyrie

Like rain

Eleison

God have mercy

God have mercy

Tears (*kyrie*)

Falling like rain

Dripping, dripping

Christe

Across the earth

Eleison

Christ have mercy

Forgive us, forgive us

Kyrie (kyrie) eleison

For we know not what we do

(we know not)

Tears (*kyrie*)

(tears) like rain

Christe eleison (eleison)

Tears (sighing) (tears)

Sighing (Ah-ah)

Like rain across the earth

Kyrie eleison

Tears shim'ring, glistening

Like rain

Christe eleison

Tears washing, healing

Like rain across the earth.

SANCTUS 1 & 2

Sanctus 1 & 2 are worship prayers for antiphonal choirs, call singer, kudu horns, djembe, praise singer(s)/poets in indigenous SA and /or international languages interpreting specifically chosen praise psalms texts, and full orchestral forces. The two “Sanctuses” frame the *In Paradisum* and their overall mood is joyous and celebratory, affirming life.

Arguably the most spectacular movement in the *Requiem for the Living*, *Sanctus 1 & 2* are full of local SA flavour mixed with international elements. The djembe (talking drum) and kudu horns combine with the

traditional praise singers intoning psalms over the orchestral music. These re-create an ancient world of religious reflection where inspired poems, drums and ram’s horns called people to prayer and reminded them of the Divine creative presence.

In this section of the work, strings provide the underlying chordal structures supporting the antiphonal choirs. Playing a very slow *kwela* rhythm (rather in the manner of the tortoises dancing the *can-can* in Saint-Saens’ *Carnival of the Animals*), theirs is a slow, cosmic dance in which primordial creatures pop up briefly and quirkily on piano, woodwind (including saxophone and contrabassoon), harp and percussion.

PROGRAMME NOTES page 11

Harmonies are predominantly major upon major without deliberate diatonic progression. These are very accessible to sing but require choral soprano voices accustomed to maintaining stamina and rounded vocal colour in high ranges. The call singer (high tenor, written at pitch) could be replaced by an alto or a baritone.

In the intervening sections, choirs and brass with tubular bells and pitched percussion combine in homo-rhythmic, powerful bursts which are gradually built up during each successive intervention, culminating in a “calm before the hosanna“ progression of close harmony chords delicately outlined by piano and harp. The final tumultuous tutti is brought to a close after ululations and dancing, by a meditative *amen*.

Although *Sanctus 1 & 2* are written in incremental layers, the rhythmic framework is so straightforward that the main challenge of putting them together lies in the balancing of textures.

IN PARADISUM

Choir: In paradisum le baiser de l'enfant Jesu

Duet: Soprano and boy soprano

In the heart of love

We are at peace

I will keep you in my heart of love

I will love you across time and space

Eternally

Choir

HOLY IS THE HEART OF LOVE HOLY, HOLY, HOLY
HOSANNA,

Boy soprano AMEN

Choir and boy soprano *HOSANNA*

In Paradisum is a tender duet for mother and child, with support from the father on the French horn woven into the orchestral ensemble fabric, and the choir commenting on the holiness of love. This movement is dedicated to my son, Bernard Theodor Boekkooi (b.1997), himself a boy soprano. The title is a reference to Faure's exquisite requiem movement of the same name, and this section of *Requiem for the Living* lies between *Sanctus 1* and *Sanctus 2*, (the company of heaven between the choirs of angels).

PROGRAMME NOTES page 13

Harp and celesta accompany the strings with a broken chord figure (pointillistically displaced) hinting at Faure's organ accompaniment.

The text "le baiser de l'enfant Jesu" (the kiss of the infant Jesus) in the opening choral line refers to one movement from Messiaen's collection of piano pieces *Vingt regards sur l'enfant Jesu*, in which ecstatic chords (briefly quoted in transposed form in this example) set the harmonic framework of the keyboard fantasy.

Whale song (recorded) features during the performance of *In Paradisum*, representing the sound of the ocean, (and maternal) womb. The opening string figures convey rippling water inhabited by fleeting creatures of the deep on flute and harp. The overall effect of this movement is deliberately harmonious, with peaceful sea string expanses and choral clouds (a freely constructed retrograde mirror of the string harmonies) offsetting the exposed solo mezzo-soprano and boy soprano solos.

BENEDICTUS ;

The *Benedictus* is very simple and delicate, requiring a boy soprano in the traditional Latin mass text, male voice choir singing an anonymous text translated into Zulu, and female voices commenting (“mysterium”) over sparse orchestration. The Latin text is set in an altered melodic contour derived from a childhood memory of a benediction sung during school carol services.

Boy soprano solo

BENEDICTUS QUI VENIT IN NOMINE DOMINI

(Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord).

Choir: in ZULU with Latin interjections

(BENEDICTUS from boy soprano and MYSTERIUM from choir sopranos and altos)

CULA SENGATH(I) AKEKHO OLALELE (cula) (MYSTERIUM) (benedictus)

(Sing as if no-one is listening)

SINA SENGATH(I) AKEKHO OBUKELE (sina) (MYSTERIUM) (benedictus)

(Dance as if no-one is watching)

THANDA SENGATH(I) AWUKAZE WAPHUKA UMOYA (thanda) (benedictus)

(Love as if you’ve never been hurt)

PHILA SENGATHI USEZULWINI EMHLABENI (benedictus)

(Live as if each day is heaven on Earth)

QUI VENIT IN NOMINE DOMINI AMEN (who comes in the name of the Lord, Amen.)



Collaborations

Professional choirs

Horizons Project Choir ~ Pieter Bezuidenhout
Gauteng Opera Chorus

School Choirs

Hoërskool Oosmoot
Loreto Convent

Rehearsal Pianists

Misha Melck
Eugene Joubert

Indigenous Instrumentalists

Mbira, Kelp Flute and Kudu Horn – Pedro Espi – Sanchis
Kudo Horn~ Adeyemi Oladiran
Djembe~ Yonah Zhoya

The text of **REQUIEM FOR THE LIVING** is arranged in the following sections:

LIBERA ME : A prayer for release from human limitations with an internal musical mirror symbolising inward reflections.

NONCREDO : Not to proclaim disbelief, but to convey the result of disbelief in love and the belief in fear – rigidity and hell on earth.

CRUCIFIXUS : A vision of a loveless world and our part in it.

DIES IRAE : Wrath and despair in a harshly diabolical dance.

LACRYMOSA/KYRIE ELEISON : Tears falling like rain and a prayer for forgiveness.

SANCTUS 1 - IN PARADISUM - SANCTUS 2 :

A vision of hope and celebration of life.

In the Sanctus 1 and 2, psalm texts are declaimed in South African languages and Hebrew, by Zulu and other praise singers/poets.

Creeping, swimming and flying creatures are instrumentally represented.

IN PARADISUM features love between child and parents.

BENEDICTUS uses the traditional Latin blessing interwoven with the following text translated into Zulu:

*Dance as if no-one is watching, Sing as if no-one is listening,
Love as if you've never been hurt, Live each day as if in heaven on earth.*

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