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NOVEMBER 12, 2014

Distinguished Concerts International New York (DCINY) presents "I Believe... Remembering the Holocaust" in Review

DISTINGUISHED CONCERTS INTERNATIONAL NEW YORK (DCINY) PRESENTS "I BELIEVE... REMEMBERING THE HOLOCAUST"

DISTINGUISHED CONCERTS ORCHESTRA, DISTINGUISHED CONCERTS SINGERS INTERNATIONAL

JONATHAN GRIFFITH, CONDUCTOR

DONALD MCCULLOUGH, CONDUCTOR/COMPOSER, ZANE ZALIS, VISITING COMPOSER

SARA JEAN FORD, SOPRANO/"TOVA"; RACHEL ARKY, MEZZO-SOPRANO; PETER KENDALL CLARK, BARITONE, ALEXANDER GEMIGNANI, "REINHARDT"; DREW GEHLING, "AARON"

ALICE TULLY HALL, LINCOLN CENTER, NEW YORK, NY NOVEMBER 9, 2014

As one who has been to many concerts given by Distinguished Concerts International New York (DCINY), I am very familiar with the "formula" employed; a joyful and/or uplifting theme presented on a large-scale, with world-class guest artists and exciting new compositions with singers of all ages from around the globe. The concert entitled "I Believe... Remembering the Holocaust" captured some of those ideals, but to call a performance in remembrance of what was arguably the most horrific example of cruelty in mankind's history "joyous" would be inconceivable; it was, however, a thought-provoking and emotionally charged evening that would have been moving even to the hardest heart. A portion of the ticket sales went to benefit the Holocaust Resource Center of Temple Judea, in Manhasset, New York.

Singers from Connecticut, Washington DC, Florida, Virginia, California, Austria, Germany, Canada, and "individuals from around the globe" joined together with the Distinguished Concerts Orchestra in the United States premieres of two works- *In the Shadow of the Holocaust* and *I Believe*.

In the Shadow of the Holocaust is a thirteen-movement work featuring music from the archives of Holocaust survivor Aleksander Kulisiewicz (1918-1992), an amateur singer and songwriter, and compiler of songs from his five years of

Combined choirs singing
In the Shadow of the Holocaust

- Jacksonville Symphony Chorus (Jacksonville, FL) Donald McCullough, Director
- Reston Chorale (Reston, VA) David Lang, Director
- Cheshire High School-Select Choir (Cheshire, CT) Beth Rosenblatt, Director
- DC Festival Chorus (Washington, DC) Ann Rollins, Manager
- Schola Cantorum (Mountain View, CA) Gregory Wait, Director
- Marion Civic Chorale, (Ocala, FL) Matthew Bumbach, Director

imprisonment. Donald McCullough selected and arranged music from this archive, but also decided to include articles and letters as well to be read before each section. Opening with a sorrow-filled lament played by a cello soloist, the tone was set for a work of sadness, strength, dignity in the face of unspeakable horror, and undying hope. Mr. McCullough proved himself to be not only a capable arranger, but also an effective and sensitive conductor. In my opinion, the selected readings gave the work the foundation of its power. The readers were all excellent, but I must single out Janet Snell in her reading of *Letter to Mom*. Her reading was so convincing that I am still emotionally devastated – it was absolutely one of the most heartbreaking things I have ever heard. The cello soloist was Caitlin Sullivan, who played with the skill of a first-rate performer and the understanding and emotional projection of a true artist throughout the work. Vocal soloists Sara Jean Ford, Rachel Arky, and Peter Kendall Clark were not to be overshadowed in their featured roles. After the end of the last movement, the silence hung in the air for what seemed an eternity. Mr. McCullough silently closed the score, set his baton down on the podium and turned to face the audience. It almost seemed that to applaud would have been inappropriate after this emotionally draining journey, but at last the silence was broken, and a justly deserved ovation was given to the performers.

by Jeffrey Williams for [New York Concert Review: New York, NY](#)

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