



The Schiller Institute
NYC Community Chorus

facebook.com/schillerchorusnyc

Symposium and Musical Tribute *In Praise of Sylvia Olden Lee*

Presented by

The Schiller Institute NYC Chorus and the
Foundation for the Revival of Classical Culture



Sunday June 26th, 2016

4:00 – 7:00 p.m.

**Good Shepherd-Faith Presbyterian
Church**

152 W 66th St, New York, NY

Suggested donation: \$10

Reception to follow.

Featuring **Everett Suttle**, tenor; **Indira Mahajan**, soprano; **Mary Phillips**, mezzo-soprano; **Rosa D’Imperio**, soprano; and other special guests, with the Schiller Institute Chorus, performing and discussing African-American Spirituals, Lieder and Opera.

**This concert will be performed at the Verdi tuning of C= 256 Hz,
“A no higher than 432.”**



How You Can Help

- 1) Bring people to the symposium/concert
- 2) Join the Schiller Institute NYC Community Chorus
- 3) Become a member of the Schiller Institute
- 4) Become a subscriber to the Foundation For The Revival Of Classical Culture concert series
- 5) Circulate this to your email and Facebook pages, and in any other way appropriate
- 6) Inform other musicians, choruses and educators of this event

For more information, please visit us at facebook.com/schillerchorusnyc,
or email newyorkchorus@schillerinstitute.org or <http://www.fftrocc.org/>

In Praise of Sylvia

The *Schiller Institute* and the *Foundation For The Revival Of Classical Culture* will co-sponsor a symposium/concert, "In Praise of Sylvia Lee". This concert will begin a one year celebration and commemoration of the life of one of America's great classical musicians and vocal teachers, Sylvia Olden Lee (June 29, 1917-April 10, 2004), a member of the Schiller Institute Advisory board from the 1990s until her death. Our goal is that at the end of that period--by June 2017--the 1500-person Schiller Institute Community Chorus project will be achieved.

During 1993-2000, Sylvia Lee worked particularly in Washington, D.C. with the Schiller Institute, with Diane Sare, Lynne Speed and others, to create a community chorus there. The focus of the work was upon D.C.'s youth, and used African-American Spirituals contained in the play "Through The Years", written by the late Amelia Boynton Robinson. Amelia was the Schiller Institute's vice-president for 22 years, and the originator of the 1965 Selma, Alabama civil rights campaign. Amelia was simultaneously a board member of the Martin Luther King Center for non-Violent Social Change in Atlanta, founded by Coretta Scott King, serving at Mrs. King's request in that capacity.

Schiller Institute founder Helga LaRouche had for years advocated that Amelia's play be revived and performed, complete with the 20 Spirituals contained therein. Twenty performances of the play were presented, including to an 1800 person overflow audience at Howard University. This work was in turn embedded in frequent concerts given in D.C. at many churches and at locations such as Constitution Hall, featuring William Warfield, George Shirley, Elvira Green, Robert McFerrin, Gregory Hopkins, and many other Classical music vocalists, often accompanied by Sylvia.

Project Sylvia

Sylvia firmly believed that the great practitioners of the Classical repertoire of the future were going to come from the garage stations, convenience stores, bowling alleys and street corners of the United States. Great music could not merely be occasionally passively experienced, but must be actively lived. In that way, the mind is inspired to assist the soul in the highest of human aspirations, no matter in what field. Diane Sare worked with Sylvia in Washington in this capacity, as did John Sigerson, co-author of the Schiller Institute's *Manual On Registration And Tuning*. They also worked closely with Sylvia's colleagues Robert McFerrin and William Warfield, who was also a Schiller Institute Board Member and a 50-year associate of Sylvia's, from 1942, even before their joint work with the Institute.

The *Manual On Registration And Tuning*, which establishes the necessity of a C equal to 256 cycles per second, proves that the A must be no higher than 432, and should lie in the range of 427 to 432 cps. This pitch has been also known for over a century as the "Verdi pitch", because of Giuseppe Verdi's successful campaign to pass legislation to that effect in the Italian parliament. The idea for the "music manual" originated with economist Lyndon LaRouche, who insisted

from the mid-1980s on this correction of the much higher A at 440, 445, 450, etc now "criminally standard" in today's concert halls. Sylvia's "Saving Young Lyric Voices In Advance" campaign fit perfectly with the aspirations of the Institute in this regard.

Sylvia was, as teacher, researcher and vocalist Elizabeth Nash stated, "an untapped vein of marching American musical history." Her mastery of the operatic repertoire was so complete that she virtually never referred to scores, and could transpose at will even the most complex arias. Her self-assigned life mission, which brought her into an eleven-year collaboration with the Schiller Institute starting in 1993, was called "Project SYLVIA--Saving Young Lyric Voices In Advance". The project was dedicated to her mother, a world-class singer and pianist, after whom Sylvia was named. (Her father, also a musician, sang in the renowned Fisk Quartet, which also included the extraordinary tenor Roland Hayes.)

Sylvia was uncompromisingly proud of her African-American heritage, and the fact that her grandfather, who was born in 1845, after escaping from a Kentucky slave plantation had served in the Civil War, first as a water boy and then as a combatant. Sylvia's mother was given the opportunity to sing at New York City's Metropolitan opera, but only if she agreed to "pass for white", which she refused to do. It was not until 1946, merely 70 years ago, that Camilla Williams would become the first African-American to sign with a major American opera company, despite the fact that composer Antonin Dvorak, who lived in New York City from 1892 until 1895, performed at that time with African-American singers and instrumentalists as soloists (soprano Sissieretta Jones et al.) at locations such as Madison Square Garden, demonstrably in opposition to the racist policy of the Metropolitan opera.

Sylvia, in a "willed historical irony", would become the first African-American to be contracted by the Met, as a vocal coach, in 1954. It would be through Sylvia that the great Marion Anderson would "break the Met color bar" in 1955, an event in the field of music as important as Jackie Robinson's "breaking the color bar" in sports in October 1945.

What You Should Do

For those that are finally fed up with America's decline, there is a clear pathway out. The economic and scientific pathway is clear. The material capabilities exist. The inner life of the people, however, is a cesspool. They have been induced to commit spiritual mass suicide, and, like most other cultures in history, will do so, if not convinced otherwise.

What is needed is a fight against "volunteered slavery". Only by transforming America's inner life, and not for this generation's sake, but for the sake of the future--for the purpose of an immediate, sweeping upshift in living standards, scientific aspirations, and mutual concern for the advance of humanity's future as a whole--can any other "immediate" societal problems be addressed and resolved. We are capable of that, but only if we can "discover an untapped vein of marching American music history" in the person and practice of persons such as Sylvia Olden Lee.