A Concert for Peace and Unity
Originally Broadcast on November 27, 2018
In Partnership with WQED and the Corporation for Public Broadcasting
Manfred Honeck, conductor
Thank you for joining for the continuation of our “Extraordinary Measures” web broadcast series. I extend my gratitude, as well, to BNY Mellon, the sponsor of our BNY Mellon Grand Classics series, for their continued support of these Friday night concerts.

This week, in commemoration of Yom HaShoah, Holocaust Remembrance Day, and in partnership with WQED, we present our “Concert for Peace and Unity,” performed and recorded live at Heinz Hall on November 27, 2018. For me, this is certainly one of the most moving experiences that I have ever been a part of, and serves as a profound reminder that those whose lives were lost will never be forgotten.

October 27, 2018 is a date that will be forever ingrained in Pittsburgh history and indeed the history of the world as unthinkable tragedy struck the Tree of Life Synagogue. Our city was immediately united not only in deep anguish and sorrow, but also a collective community strength, resilience and resolve. Across all faiths and walks of life, people throughout Pittsburgh and around the world joined in deep expressions of consolation, solidarity and support.

The Pittsburgh Symphony Orchestra’s response was… music. United by the knowledge that music has the ability to heal and bring people together, we joined together in mourning and remembrance. Together with WQED, we quickly made plans to present the “Concert for Peace and Unity.” Our dear friend, the Israeli-American violinist Itzhak Perlman, immediately agreed to join us on the Heinz Hall stage. And community partners including The Mendelssohn Choir of Pittsburgh, the Pittsburgh Ballet Theatre School, and representatives of the City, the Police Force, the Jewish Federation of Greater Pittsburgh and the Corporation for Public Broadcasting all lent their powerful presence and support.

We were all connected in that moment, united as brothers, sisters and families. For me as a conductor, I was profoundly thankful to be able to participate and provide some consolation through music. Music, as we know, has the ability to go deep into the soul.

I am honored to share the full concert with you which includes moving words by our guest speakers Rabbi Jeffrey Myers, Wasiullah Mohamed, Dr. Jeffrey Cohen, Ari Mahler and Liron Blumenthal. Immediately following the performance, I invite you to please stay with us for a special conversation between Melia Tourangeau (president of the Pittsburgh Symphony Orchestra); Deb Acklin (president of WQED), Tatjana Mead Chamis (the Orchestra’s Acting Principal Violist), Rabbi Jeffrey Myers (leader of the Tree of Life synagogue), and Grant Oliphant (president of the Heinz Endowments).

We thank you for joining us for this special and memorable community remembrance.
Arvo Pärt (born in 1935)
*Cantus in Memory of Benjamin Britten* (1977)

Estonian composer Arvo Pärt composed the *Cantus in Memory of Benjamin Britten* for Strings and Bell in 1977 in tribute to the renowned English composer Benjamin Britten, who died on December 4, 1976 in Aldeburgh, Suffolk. This brief but deeply moving threnody, begun by the solitary, pealing bell, is based on a single thematic idea, a falling step-wise motive that slowly cascades from the high violins to the deep basses above a mournful sustained harmony. The music’s grief grows more intense as it descends into the string choir’s lower reaches, but its somber rhythmic motion becomes slower, as though the funeral cortege were increasingly reluctant to reach the final resting place. Its stark simplicity of concept and singularity of emotion give this musical obsequy an expressive significance that, like the man it honors, transcends the too-short time that it dwells among us.

Program Insight: One of the biggest challenges in imagining the “Concert for Peace and Unity” was the question of how to begin. How does one find a starting point out of the blurriness of unthinkable tragedy? The Pärt came to mind as an entry point into the evening. The significance and poignancy of the opening bell tolls followed by the misty, suspended atmospheric strings provided the solemn and spiritual tone from which the evening could unfold.

Maurice Ravel (1875-1937)
“Kaddish” from *Deux Mélodies Hébraïques* for Clarinet and String Orchestra (1914)

Ravel’s *Deux Mélodies Hébraïques* were commissioned in 1914 by the Russian soprano Alvina Alvi, who premiered them with the composer at the June 3rd concert of the Société Musicale Indépendante in Paris. The *Kaddish*, haunting and austere, is based on a richly decorated cantorial melody set to one of the most revered texts of the Jewish liturgy: *May Thy glory, O King of Kings, be exalted, to Thou who art to renew the world and resurrect the dead.*

Program Insight: It was important to reflect early in the program the distinctive sound world and flavor of the clarinet (Klezmer tradition) coupled with the deep meaning and significance of the Kaddish mourning prayer.

Dmitri Shostakovich (1906-1975)
“Largo” from Symphony No. 5 in D minor, Opus 47 (1937)

The Shostakovich Fifth Symphony’s deepest pathos is reserved for the third movement. It is dominated by string sonorities, with woodwinds and percussion providing limited timbral contrast. The heavy brass is silent. This movement is best heard not in a specific formal context but as an extended soliloquy embracing the most deeply felt emotions. For much of its length, the expression is subdued, but twice the music gathers enough strength to hurl forth a mighty, despairing cry. The disembodied sound of celesta and harp closes this gripping *Largo*, which the eminent Russian-American conductor Sergei Koussevitzky thought to be the greatest symphonic slow movement since Beethoven.

Program Insight: Shostakovich’s enormous, emotional expressive range—-from subdued pain, to wailing outbursts—continued the line heading toward the center of the program. This movement embodies something personal, yet universal; there is concealed tragedy and hopelessness amidst moments of childlike simplicity and beauty; desperate outcries are counterbalanced by anguish, tears and sorrow.

David Zehavi (1910-1977)
*Eli, Eli* (“My God, My God”) (1945)

Hannah Szënes was born into an assimilated Jewish family in Budapest in 1921 and attended a private Protestant school (where Jews paid three times as much tuition). By the time she graduated, in 1939, Hannah had become a committed Zionist and emigrated to Palestine to study agriculture, moving to the Kibbutz at Sdot Yam, on the Mediterranean coast, and joining a paramilitary group in 1941. Two years later she enlisted in the Women’s Auxiliary Air Force of the British Army and trained in Egypt as a paratrooper. In March 1944 Szënes parachuted into Yugoslavia on a mission to try to get into Hungary to save Jews from being transported to Auschwitz. Her male colleagues called off the mission as too dangerous but Hannah continued, was captured in July by German troops at the border, imprisoned, tortured, and executed by firing squad on November 7, 1944. “I played a number in a game. The dice have rolled,” she wrote as one of the last entries in the diary she managed to keep. “I have lost.... I loved the warm sunlight.” She was 23.

In 1942, soon after Szënes settled in Sdot Yam, she wrote a Hebrew poem, a supplication for eternal ecstasy, titled *A Walk to Caesarea*, the ancient port city four miles up the coast: “*My God, My God [Eli, Eli]/I pray that these things never end./The sand and the sea,/The rustle of the waters,/Lightning of the Heavens,/The prayer of Man.*” It was set to music in 1945 by David Zehavi, born in Jaffa in 1910 to Romanian immigrants, who joined the new agricultural Kibbutz at Na’an when was fourteen and supplemented his work on the farm by leading community song sessions.
He wrote much music for the group, publishing his first song in 1927 and going on to compose 400 more, many to lyrics by Kibbutz members. Zehavi’s songs remain popular in performance, recordings and community gatherings, and his setting of Eli, Eli, which has become something of an unofficial anthem in Israel, is especially associated with Yom HaShoah — Holocaust Memorial Day.

Program Insight: An immediate instinct was to place this piece, rapt with great significance and meaning, at the heart of the program. The Clarion Quartet (Jennifer Orchard and Marta Krechkovsky, violins; Tatjana Mead Chamis, viola; Bronwyn Banerdt, cello) had performed Eli, Eli as an addition to start our concert program on the evening of October 27, 2018. Here on this occasion marking the one-month anniversary of the Tree of Life tragedy, Eli, Eli was preceded by the reading of the 11 victims’ names. The work was then performed together with eleven string players.

James MacMillan (born in 1959)
Larghetto for Orchestra (composed as Miserere for chorus in 2009; orchestrated for Manfred Honeck and the Pittsburgh Symphony Orchestra in 2017)

Larghetto for Orchestra, commissioned by the Pittsburgh Symphony Orchestra in honor of Manfred Honeck’s 10th Anniversary season, is James MacMillan’s instrumental version of the a cappella Miserere he composed for the acclaimed London-based choral ensemble The Sixteen in 2009. The text for the choral work, the penitential Psalm 51 — Miserere mei, Deus: Have mercy upon me, O God, after Thy great goodness. According to the multitude of Thy mercies, do away mine offences. Wash me thoroughly from my wickedness, and cleanse me from my sin. For I acknowledge my faults — is taken from the Matins service of Tenebrae ("darkness"), which encompasses the most solemn moments of the Christian year. The term is applied to the combined Roman Catholic services of Matins and Lauds that bracket daylight on Thursday, Friday and Saturday of Holy Week, during which fifteen candles signifying the ebbing life of Christ are extinguished one-by-one after the singing of the obligatory Psalms. The service closes “in tenebris.” MacMillan’s Miserere and its Larghetto for Orchestra analogue not only plumb the images and emotions of the individual verses, but also trace a slowly swelling optimism, from the recognition and repentance of the opening lines to hope of forgiveness at the close.

Program Insight: In addition to the spiritual significance of this work based on the Miserere text, Larghetto for Orchestra has an important connection to Pittsburgh, having been commissioned by the Pittsburgh Symphony Orchestra. It combines mourning and lament with a call for mercy and healing, ultimately expressed in the hope for redemption.

Felix Mendelssohn (1809 -1847)
“Lift Thine Eyes to the Mountains” from Elijah, Opus 70 (1846)

Elijah was a Hebrew prophet several centuries before Christ whose calling was to destroy the pagan cults of Baal introduced into Israel by Jezebel, the wife of the errant Israelite king Ahab. Elijah was the hero of many stories, some of which look forward to aspects of Christ’s life. Elijah departed from the earth in a chariot of fire, leaving his sacred mantle and the continuation of his work to his disciple, Elisha. The prophet also figures prominently in the Koran, the sacred book of Islam.

Mendelssohn’s oratorio based on the Old Testament prophet, premiered with spectacular success at the Birmingham (England) Festival on August 26, 1846, was long considered his masterpiece, the greatest work of its kind created during the 19th century. It was the music of first choice for performance at memorial concerts following his death — London heard it just two weeks after he died — and was the principal means by which funds were raised in England to establish a Mendelssohn Scholarship Fund to send promising students to the Leipzig Conservatory. It has been performed more often in England than any other work of its type except Messiah. Elijah is one of the monuments of the vocal literature, a work that transcends theology and denomination. “In its best numbers,” wrote Eric Werner in his study of Mendelssohn, “it rises to realms of awe that are no longer accessible to rational language. In this respect, it stands on a lonely height, near to the creations of Bach and Handel.”

Lift thine eyes to the mountains, whence cometh help.  Thy help cometh from the Lord, the Maker of heaven and earth.  He hath said, thy foot shall not be moved:  Thy Keeper will never slumber.  (Psalm CXXI 1-3)

Program Insight: “Lift Thine Eyes to the Mountains” represents a turning point in the program. Here, only voices are heard—— no instruments. It is the beginning of a shift from darkness to light, and ultimately healing and transcendence.

Johannes Brahms (1833-1897)
“Weie lieblich sind deine Wohnungen” from Ein deutsches Requiem (“A German Requiem”), Opus 45 (1857-1868)

Though Brahms was raised in the beliefs of German Protestantism, he was not a religious man. He did not bother with the church, and confessed in the last year of his life to his biographer Max Kalbeck that he had never believed in life after death. His knowledge of the Bible, however, was thorough, and he continued to enjoy the comfort that reading it provided him throughout his life. When he chose the texts for his German Requiem, he took the greatest care to eschew dogmatism, avoiding passages mentioning the name of Christ. Rather than a specifically sectarian document, he saw the work as a universal response by a sensitive soul to the inevitability and sorrow of death, and he even noted that he would be happy if the word
“Mankind” could replace the word “German” in the title. A German Requiem is consoling rather than mournful, a work of grand scope and surpassing excellence, rich in a substance that never wavers from its purpose of sharing a universal experience through the incandescent beauties that only music can provide.

Wie lieblich sind deine Wohnungen, Herr Zebaoth!
Meine Seele verlanget und sehnet sich nach den Vorhöfen des Herrn;
mein Leib und Seele freuen sich in dem lebendigen Gott.

Wohl denen, die in deinem Hause wohnen, die loben dich immerdar!

(Psalm 84:1-2, 4)

Program Insight: With the German Requiem, Brahms sought to share a universal response to the sorrow of death. Here it is not only one of mourning, but also comfort and consolation, further continuing the line from darkness toward light.

Sir Edward Elgar (1857–1934)
“Nimrod” from Variations on an Original Theme, “Enigma,” Opus 36 (1898–1899)

Elgar’s “Enigma” Variations posits not just one puzzle, but three. First, each of the fourteen sections was headed with a set of initials or a nickname that stood for the name of the composer’s friend portrayed by that variation. The second mystery dealt with the theme itself, the section that bore the legend “Enigma.” It is believed that the theme represented Elgar himself (there is a similarity of the opening phrase of the original theme to the speech rhythm of his name — Ed-ward EL-gar), thus making the variations upon it portraits of his friends as seen through his eyes. The final enigma, the one that neither Elgar offered to explain nor for which others have been able to find a definitive solution, arose from a statement of his: “Through the whole set another and larger theme ‘goes’ but is not played.... So the principal theme never appears.” Conjectures about this unplayed theme that fits each of the variations have ranged from Auld Lang Syne (which guess Elgar vehemently denied) to a phrase from Wagner’s Parsifal. One theory was published in 1975 by the Dutch musicologist Theodore van Houten, who speculated that the phrase “never, never, never” from the grand old tune Rule, Britannia fits the requirements, and even satisfies some of the baffling clues that Elgar had spread to his friends. (“So the principal theme never appears.”) We shall never know for sure. Elgar took the solution to his grave. Though the noble and poignant Variation IX (Nimrod) has become universally associated with musical commemorations, it was conceived as a musical tribute to August Johannes Jaeger, Elgar’s publisher and close friend, who lived and worked for another decade after “Enigma” was written. The title, borrowed from the great Old Testament hunter Nimrod, is a play on Jaeger’s name and the German homonym “Jäger” (“hunter”).

Program Insight: An equal challenge to the question of how to begin the program arose with the question of how to find an appropriate conclusion. What work could evoke the right combination of poignancy, yet gentle hope; solemnity, yet reverence; weightiness, yet something cathartic? Elgar’s musical tribute, “Nimrod” from the Enigma Variations was the answer. Directly following the last notes of the Elgar, the evening was framed by bell strokes to close, mirroring the bell strokes that began the program, but this time eleven tolls of the bell now in memory of the eleven lives lost all too soon.

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Edited by Mary Persin

John Williams (born in 1932)
Three Pieces from Schindler’s List for Violin and Orchestra (1993)

In 1993, John Williams composed the score for Steven Spielberg’s searing screen drama Schindler’s List, starring Liam Neeson, Ben Kingsley and Ralph Fiennes. The film, the most acclaimed movie of the year, won for Williams an Oscar for his music and for Spielberg his first Academy Award as director. As preface to the Three Pieces that he extracted from the score for concert performance, the composer wrote, “The film’s ennobling story, set in the midst of the great tragedy of the Holocaust, offered an opportunity to create not only dramatic music, but also themes that reflected the more tender and nostalgic aspects of Jewish life during those turbulent years. For this part of the soundtrack, I featured a solo violin, and it was our greatest fortune was to have Itzhak Perlman for the recording. Included here are three pieces — Theme from ‘Schindler’s List,’ Jewish Town [Krakow Ghetto — Winter ‘41] and Remembrances — which embody the main thematic elements of the score.”

Program Insight: In the earliest moments of planning the “Concert for Peace and Unity,” the great Israeli-American violinist and dear friend of the Pittsburgh Symphony Orchestra, Itzhak Perlman, came to mind. Itzhak answered the call with an immediate yes to come to Pittsburgh and chose the three stirring pieces from Schindler’s List, for which he is universally known.
PROGRAM

MUSIC FOR THE SPIRIT: A CONCERT FOR PEACE AND UNITY | HEINZ HALL
TUESDAY, NOVEMBER 27, 2018 AT 7:30 P.M.

Manfred Honeck, conductor
Itzhak Perlman, violin
Michael Rusinek, clarinet
Mendelssohn Choir of Pittsburgh [Matthew Mehaffey, director]

OPENING REMARKS
Melia Tourangeau, President & CEO, Pittsburgh Symphony Orchestra
Patricia de Stacy Harrison, President & CEO, Corporation for Public Broadcasting
Rich Fitzgerald, Allegheny County Executive
Jeffrey Finkelstein, President & CEO, Jewish Federation of Greater Pittsburgh
Scott Schubert, Pittsburgh Police Chief

Arvo Pärt
Cantus in Memory of Benjamin Britten

Maurice Ravel
“Kaddish” from Deux Mélodies Hébraïques
(arr. Tognetti)
for Clarinet and String Orchestra
Mr. Rusinek

READING
Mourner’s Kaddish
Rabbi Jeffrey Myers

Dmitri Shostakovich
“Largo” from Symphony No. 5 in D minor, Opus 47

READING
Faith by Arthur Guiterman
Eli, Eli (“My God, My God”), A Walk to Caesarea by Hannah Senesh
Liron Blumenthal

David Zehavi
Eli, Eli (“My God, My God”), A Walk to Caesarea
(arr. Pigovat)

James MacMillan
Larghetto for Orchestra

READING
Prayer for Peace by Satish Kumar
Wasiullah Mohamed

Felix Mendelssohn
“Lift Thine Eyes to the Mountains” from Elijah, Opus 70
Mendelssohn Choir of Pittsburgh

Johannes Brahms
Ein deutsches Requiem (A German Requiem), Opus 45
IV. Wie lieblich sind deine Wohnungen
Mendelssohn Choir of Pittsburgh

John Williams
Three Pieces from Schindler’s List for Violin and Orchestra
Remembrances
Jewish Town – Krakow Ghetto 1941
Theme
Mr. Perlman

READING
We Remember Them by Sylvan Kamens & Rabbi Jack Riemer
Dr. Jeffrey Cohen

READING
Mishlei, Proverbs 3:1, 18
Original Text by Ari Mahler
Ari Mahler

Edward Elgar
“Nimrod” from Variations on an Original Theme,
“Enigma,” Opus 36

Moments of Silence
Mourner’s Kaddish

Exalted and hallowed be God’s great name in the world which God created, according to plan. May God’s majesty be revealed in the days of our lifetime and the life of all Israel — speedily, imminently, to which we say: Amen.

Blessed be God’s great name to all eternity.

Blessed, praised, honored, exalted, extolled, glorified, adored, and lauded be the name of the Holy Blessed One, beyond all earthly words and songs of blessing, praise, and comfort. To which we say: Amen.

May there be abundant peace from heaven, and life, for us and all Israel. To which we say: Amen.

May the One who creates harmony on high, bring peace to us and to all Israel. To which we say: Amen.

Rabbi Jeffrey Myers is honored and privileged to serve as the tenth Rabbi of Tree of Life*Or L’Simcha, a rich tradition that harkens back to 1864. Rabbi Hazzan Myers received a BA from Rutgers, an MA in Jewish Education from the Jewish Theological Seminary, and studied privately with Cantor Zvi Aroni before graduating from the Cantorial School of The Jewish Theological Seminary (JTS).

Faith by Arthur Guiterman from Anthology of Modern Jewish Poetry

Last night I dreamed of Death. It seemed I lay
Engulfed in blackness; yet some sense could mark
For all the breathless gloom, the steadfast ray
Of one far candle shining through the dark.

Joyce Fienberg    Jerry Rabinowitz    Bernice Simon    Melvin Wax
Richard Gottfried  Cecil Rosenthal     Sylvan Simon   Irving Younger
Rose Mallinger    David Rosenthal     Daniel Stein

May their memory be a blessing.

Eli, Eli (“My God, My God”), A Walk to Caesarea by Hannah Senesh

My God, My God
May these never end...
The sand and the sea
The rustle of the waters
The lightning of the heavens,
The prayer of the heart.

Liron Blumenthal is a Pittsburgh native and life-long resident of Squirrel Hill. She attended Community Day School and Allderdice High School and is currently a senior Musical Theatre Major at Point Park University.

Prayer for Peace by Satish Kumar

From the sermon given in Oslo Cathedral by the vice-chairman of the Nobel Committee following the presentation to Mother Teresa of the Nobel Prize for Peace

Lead me from death to life,     Lead me from hate to love,
from falsehood to truth;       from war to peace;
Lead me from despair to hope,  Let peace fill our heart, our world,
from fear to trust;            Our universe.

Wasiullah (Wasi) Mohamed is a life-long Pennsylvania resident and has served as the Executive Director of the Islamic Center of Pittsburgh since 2015. In this position, Wasi works to empower, educate, and unite the diverse community in Western PA through social services and outreach programs. Well-known as an interfaith bridge builder, with a keen interest in Jewish-Muslim relations, he has been an instrumental leader in raising over $250,000 for the victims’ families following the Tree of Life tragedy.
We Remember Them by Sylvan Kamens & Rabbi Jack Riemer

We Remember Them

At the rising sun and at its going down; We remember them.
At the blowing of the wind and in the chill of winter; We remember them.
At the opening of the buds and in the rebirth of spring; We remember them.
At the blueness of the skies and in the warmth of summer; We remember them.
At the rustling of the leaves and in the beauty of the autumn; We remember them.
At the beginning of the year and when it ends; We remember them.
As long as we live, they too will live, for they are now a part of us as We remember them.

When we are weary and in need of strength; We remember them.
When we are lost and sick at heart; We remember them.
When we have decisions that are difficult to make; We remember them.
When we have joy we crave to share; We remember them.
When we have achievements that are based on theirs; We remember them.
For as long as we live, they too will live, for they are now a part of us as, We remember them.

Dr. Jeffrey Cohen is President of Allegheny General Hospital, was the President of Triangle Urology Group, is the President of ChemImage Corporation and is an Associate Professor of Surgery at Drexel University/Allegheny General Hospital. A Squirrel Hill resident, Dr. Cohen attends Tree of Life.

Mishlei, Proverbs 3:1, 18

My son, forget not My instruction, and may your heart keep My commandments; [...] It is a tree of life for those who hold fast to it... [we draw near to it to heal once again.]

Original Text by Ari Mahler

My friends, each person here, love is the only message I wish to instill in you. Love. That’s why I did it. If my actions meant anything, love means everything. Love is why we care for the stranger, as we care for one another, as we care for ourselves. Love as an action is more powerful than words, and love in the face of evil gives others hope. It demonstrates humanity. Love reaffirms why we’re all here. The meaning of life is to give meaning to life, and love is the ultimate force that connects all living beings.

Love deeply. Love blindly. Love faithfully. Love selflessly. Love unexpectedly. Love without question. Love with every breath. Love the stranger, love those that are different, reaffirm love that has been lost, love yourself and equally love the world. The more you love others, the more love you will find within.
I believe in you. I trust you. I feel your heart beat as if it were my own. Care for my heart as if it were your own. Trust the heart, it’s the most beautiful possession we share.
I love you as we are one. Woven together to share the beauty of passion, the kindness of empathy, and the virtue of selflessness.

Love so that even when the world seems as dark as it did in Pittsburgh, love casts light.

Love me as I love you. Love as if love is all that matters.

Ari Mahler is a Registered Nurse at Allegheny General Hospital in the Emergency Department. He is also a writer. His post on Facebook regarding his experience following the tragedy, and his reflections on love and Judaism were featured in over 500 news stories and broadcasts across the world, reaching over 800 million people.


Artists at the Concert for Peace and Unity.
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A Concert for Peace and Unity - Originally Broadcast on November 27, 2018

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