

DIRECTOR'S NOTES

"Music for Dreamtime" was inspired by Ola Gjeilo's brand-new companion piece to *Sunrise Mass* (written fifteen years ago and performed twice by 3RC). Through a commission from Distinguished Concerts International New York (DCINY), Ola was able to finish this work for large chorus and string orchestra in time for a 2023 world premiere. Seven of our singers flew to NYC and participated in that event on November 13.

In the Carnegie program for that premiere, Ola wrote:

"Ever since my *Sunrise Mass* premiered in 2008, I've wanted to write a companion piece to it, or a kind of 'sequel'. So I was very excited when that opportunity arose with this commission from DCINY. There is something about the Latin Mass text that is deeply inspiring to me, I love it so much.

"*Twilight* is similar in style to *Sunrise*, but contrasting in form (and title). Instead of four fairly long movements, I went with nine shorter, bite-sized movements, which is also the main reason it turned into a *Missa Brevis*, with the longest text -- the Credo -- omitted. The other contrast is the addition of piano and soprano soloist."

3 Rivers Chorale is performing the final movement from *Sunrise Mass* to start our program today. We present three other gems along the theme of *Twilight*. Enjoy!!

3RC Singers' Stories:

Experiencing the Nov. 13, 2023 world premiere of *Twilight Mass* at Carnegie Hall

Singing with 230 voices from around the world in Carnegie hall is certainly a joy too amazing to even explain. The sound absorbs through your entire being. Spending time with Ola Gjeilo is the icing on the cake. He is a kind and gentle man, and that resonates throughout his music. He's very detailed in his approach to getting his music presented just as he wrote it. Seeing him work with the conductor during rehearsals to get it just right was awe-inspiring.

The conductor, Dr Jonathan Griffith, was completely dedicated to bringing Ola's music to perfection. Although the multiple rehearsals were long and tedious, the result was perfection with voices from multiple countries and backgrounds. I can only conjure the word "Amazing"!

~Sandy Lommel

For me the most challenging aspect was the rehearsal process prior to New York, since this was a piece of music that had never been performed or recorded. We were able to get the flavor of the music in our rehearsals here with 3RC, but once we got to NYC and had the power of 230-plus voices coming together, the amazing direction of Dr Griffith and the quiet passion of Ola Gjeilo, everything changed.

During the performance, at about the sixth movement, I looked down at Ola, accompanying us on the piano. The beauty and the reward were captured in that moment and I was overwhelmed with joy to be a part of bringing this piece to life for the very first time.

Rachelle McMahan

One of my first impressions of this amazing experience was when we met in what appeared to be an old church to rehearse. We spent the first hour learning to breathe. This director was demanding and he encouraged us to rise above his expectations. When we began singing, the rehearsal space filled with the most amazing blend of voices -- 230 singers completely prepared to sing. In the back of the space stood Ola Gjeilo just quietly taking in his music. He approached the stage and addressed the choir. As he left he pulled out his phone and took a picture. He was clearly anxious for his new music to be shared.

Each day we rehearsed for over 4 hours and left energized. Our final performance was nothing short of amazing. I did not expect a standing ovation at Carnegie Hall and the overwhelming emotion that followed. We arrived at the reception to be seated at the table next to Ola Gjeilo and our Director Jonathan Griffith. Both took time to casually visit with us. Just amazing to have the incredible opportunity to not only sing in Carnegie Hall but to spend time with such talented musicians.

~Jodie Fulton

I was struck by Ola's quiet and unassuming manner. I was surprised by the deference of the conductor to Ola as the composer/creator. It was as if Ola had given them and us a precious gift and we were going to birth it into the universe. His composition infused new life into a familiar but ancient language of the Mass. As his melodies, harmonies and exquisite piano accompaniment surrounded me, I felt we were on sacred ground, immersed in a cloud of prayer.

~Nancy Czapinski

I learned so much in the first rehearsal from the conductor about breathing, attack of syllables, tone quality, concert etiquette, etc. It was like attending a master class. Also, the conductor had extremely high standards and would let us know when we didn't rise to the level he demanded in no uncertain terms. He wasn't willing to let us just be a group of wonderful voices. He fought hard for us to have the opportunity to bring this beautiful music to life in this magical place, Carnegie Hall. And to create something beyond just good, or very good, but superb! And we did.

Ola struck me as probably a very shy person and not comfortable with being in front of large groups of people. You could tell that he has worked hard to get over that in order to mingle with others. He was soft-spoken but pleasant to be around. He is obviously a brilliant composer and one that will be remembered and whose work will be performed long after he is gone.

It was so much fun to sing with so many talented singers. There were probably 70 basses. Being surrounded by other singers around you singing the same part was one of the most awesome experiences of my life. The acoustics in Carnegie Hall were amazing. I could hear everything, everybody. Every singer in the world should have that experience.

I was surprised by how much I enjoyed the rehearsals! I came in nervous and left with a huge smile on my face. I was surprised by how emotional an experience it was to perform at Carnegie Hall. And to get thunderous applause! And a standing ovation! That was just icing on the cake.

With that many voices, the orchestra, the soloist and Ola as pianist, we were no longer individuals, we became one. It was one the most magical experiences of my life. And I will never forget it.

~ Steve Chroninger
