

NCC Interfaith Relations

Reflections on current and critical issues by a Christian engaging in interfaith relations

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Making Music Speak for Those Without a Voice



This morning's New York Times carries a great report on the Monday night concert "Requiem for Darfur" at Carnegie Hall. George Mathew, the conductor of the orchestra was also the organizer of the concert -- gathering musicians, students from Juliard as well as top professionals from many orchestras around the world, and organizing the recipients of the funds, UNICEF, Refugees

International, Jewish World

Service and the National Council of Churches. The NCC as a member of the Save Darfur Coalition is already engaged in advocacy. However, we hope to use the funds to take a delegation of religious leaders to connect with religious leaders in Sudan, to raise public awareness and advocate for a just settlement of the issues.

Here's a quote from Anthony Tommasini's NY Times article:

Verdi's great work, presented not just as a prayer for the dead but as a call to compassion and purpose, came through affectingly. The apocalyptic Dies Irae ("The day of wrath, that day will dissolve the world in ashes") is always chilling. But it is hard to describe the effect of hearing this ferocious music while

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seeing a photograph by Ron Haviv projected on the wall behind the performers: it showed a painting by a Sundanese boy (now a refugee in Chad) of his home village burning, with bodies on the ground and attacking militia on horses.

For me, the most powerful picture is the one that is featured above. It is of a young woman who has clearly suffered a great deal, but still stands tall. There's a sadness in her eyes, but they are also defiant. This nameless woman to me stands for all those who hold a great sense of dignity in the midst of utter adversity.

Mia Farrow (UN goodwill ambassador to Darfur) and Jan Egeland (former UN Under Secretary General for Humanitarian Affairs) spoke at the concert. Pictures taken by Ms. Farrow were projected to the wall behind the orchestra. To me, the concert was a prayer, both of intercession for the people of Darfur and of commitment to redouble my efforts for a just solution there.

I join in the chorus of congratulations to George Mathew for this masterful accomplishment!

[Read the New York Times article here.](#)

[Read the UNICEF Press release here.](#)

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