

Making Music Speak for Those Without a Voice

Aspiring classical musicians struggling to find work and established professionals with well-paying positions in major orchestras may seem to live in different worlds. But

**ANTHONY
TOMMASINI**

**MUSIC
REVIEW**

young or old, student or master, most musicians understand that the art they practice is capable of reaching, and even changing, people profoundly.

It was not surprising that so many musicians, both fledglings and stars, responded when George Mathew, a conductor on the faculty at the Manhattan School of Music, sought instrumentalists and choristers for a performance of Verdi's Requiem at Carnegie Hall as a benefit for organizations providing relief to victims of the conflict in the Darfur region of western Sudan.

The "Requiem for Darfur" took place on Monday night. Among the participants were Glenn Dicterow, the concertmaster of the New York Philharmonic, serving as concertmaster here; the violinist Eugene Drucker of the Emerson String Quartet; David Soyer, the founding cellist of the Guarneri Quartet; Timothy Cobb, the principal bass player of the Met Orchestra; Joseph Pereira, a percussionist of the New York Philharmonic; and players from the Juilliard School, the Philadelphia Orchestra, the West-Eastern Divan Orchestra and many other schools and orchestras, even the Berlin Philharmonic.

The host was the actress Mia Farrow, who has visited the Sudan area twice as a goodwill ambassador for Unicef. She spoke of the devastation from the militia attacks and the killing of what is estimated to be about 400,000 people. Nearly 4 million have been displaced or adversely affected.

Photographs that Ms. Farrow took in Sudan were projected on the back wall of the stage: a refugee camp in a deforested desert holding 137,000; a group of children who had not eaten for nine days. Jan Egeland, a former United Nations under-secretary general for humanitarian affairs, spoke next, reminding the audience that Darfur was not a natural disaster ("This is no tsunami"), but a man-made crisis that can be stopped.

Unfortunately, the hall seemed to be about half full. Mr. Mathew had recruited four experienced vocal soloists: the soprano Alexandra Deshorties, the mezzo-soprano Sarah Heltzel, the tenor Scott Piper and the bass Morris D. Robinson. Last year Mr. Mathew presented a comparable benefit at Carnegie Hall, "Beetho-



Richard Termine for The New York Times

Requiem for Darfur At Carnegie Hall on Monday, George Mathew conducted while photos taken in Sudan were shown.

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ven's Ninth for South Asia." He seems not yet the kind of skilled technician who can pull together a strong performance of Verdi's challenging Requiem with limited rehearsal, especially with a disparate group of musicians and choristers, however willing and experienced.

But this was not a night for critical assessments. 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 seeing a photograph by Ron Haviv projected on the wall behind the performers: it showed a painting by a Sudanese boy (now a refugee in Chad) of his home village burning, with bodies on the ground and attacking militia on horses.