

# An Introduction to Three Musical Performances Neither Chords nor Notes Exist

*This is an edited transcription of remarks made by John Sigerson to the Schiller Institute conference in Morristown, N.J. on Feb. 16, 2019. Mr. Sigerson is a founding member of the Schiller Institute and is its Music Director. He is the co-author of A Manual on the Rudiments of Tuning and Registration.*

**Moderator Dennis Speed:** John Sigerson is a lot more than a music or choral director. He will be presiding over the next three sections of our program. But, in the last conversation that I had with Lyndon LaRouche, which was in August of this past year—a long conversation in person—I began talking to him about some of what we were doing in New York with the music work, and told him that John had this idea about the Beethoven *Mass in C*, and began to describe some other things. And he said this, he said: “Well, John knows what the path is. Let him define the path. He’ll figure out how to take the people from one level to another. That’s what you need.”

So, John Sigerson will now take over. [applause]

**John Sigerson:** For time reasons I’m going to shorten my comments, but I want to point out just one thing to understand, one thing that was very shocking to me when I first started working with Lyndon LaRouche. He said to me: “Chords don’t exist. Notes don’t exist.”



EIRNS/Stuart Lewis

John Sigerson

As a matter of fact, if you really think about it, music is completely *soundless*. Because the real music is in your mind, in the changes that occur. A change is a physical effect, but it’s not something tangible. The whole point of beautiful Classical composition, and the reason why you must refine your technique, your ability to do that, is to make yourself into the most transparent carrier of those ideas. That’s the point, that’s the reason why you want to have beauty of tone in music, and beauty of phrasing and all of these things, but it’s all as a way of making yourself transparent to the creative breakthroughs, the creative development that the composer has presented you with; or the creative problem that the composer has presented to you, that the performer must *solve*.

## The Song of the Bell

We are going to begin with a performance of a piece that Johannes Brahms wrote, which was only published 30 years after his death. He wrote it for the funeral of his close collaborator and friend, Robert Schumann, the composer. He took it from a poem, just a little bit of a poem, which at that time, was a poem known by *every single* German schoolchild—and probably in America, too—Friedrich Schiller’s *Song of the Bell*.

This is a poem about the construction of the bell, as a way of thinking about the construction of a healthy



Schiller Institute

John Sigerson conducting J.S. Bach's Brandenburg Concerto No. 5 in D Major.

human society. Everybody knew this poem. Rather than trying to compose music for the entire poem, which some people did, but not really with great success, Brahms did exactly what Beethoven did with Schiller's *Ode to Joy*: He took a little piece of it. This is the funeral section, and it seems appropriate today.

*The Chorus then warmed up in front of the audience—singing four notes, which Sigerson described as a tribute to Beethoven. Beethoven used those same four notes as a core idea for many of his works. Then the Chorus and Orchestra performed Dem dunkeln Schoß der Heil'gen Erde by Johannes Brahms.*

### Bach's Brandenburg Concerto No. 5

Brahms would not have been possible without Johann Sebastian Bach. Beethoven would not have been possible. Bach discovered the entire nonlinear universe of the well-tempered system. Instead of a flat universe, the well-tempered system is an extremely complex universe. It's not a simple equal-tempered system. Well-tempering is an idea of principle, where every note in the scale has a universe inside of itself: It's like a Leibnizian monad. If you have never read Gottfried Leibniz, please do avail yourself. Learn what Leibniz says about the so-called "monad," which is otherwise known as a *soul*, but also can be thought of as a substance. That is, that every single substance, whether animate or inanimate, contains within it the potential of the entire universe. And that's exactly the way that Bach uses the well-tempered system and opens up this wonderful world, which otherwise, before then was somewhat inaccessible.

We're now going to [perform](#) Bach's *Brandenburg Concerto No. 5*, just the first movement, for time reasons. We're going to have as our soloists Gregor Kitzis, violin, and Laura Thompson, flautist. Our piano (continuo) soloist will be My-Hoa Steger. [applause]

### Beethoven's Choral Fantasy

Before we start our last piece, let me read something. Looking back over the course of his life, Lyndon LaRouche wrote, "For me life is truly wonderful. Over the course of decades of a turbulently fruitful life, I've had the satisfaction, and sometimes the frustration, of effecting numerous discoveries in various aspects of experience and inquiry. Some of these have served the tasks that I put before myself during the period that the discoveries were made. Most were biproducts of intent, used for awhile to exercise the fact of their being and put aside into memory, gradually taken for granted, forgetting the fact that they had been discovered, forgetting the pleasure associated with their discovery. Now, as my own work and that of my immediate collaborators takes the form of a Platonic dialogue in numerous fields of inquiry, I have occasion to revive some of the stored-up discoveries of the past, to recall the circumstances and pleasure of their origins, and to polish their further development for current practice."

Lyndon LaRouche wrote that in 1978, at age 55, and what a richness he had since then. He lived many lives, I would say.

*The Chorus and Orchestra then [performed](#) Beethoven's Choral Fantasy in C minor, Opus 80.*