



**Ludwig Van Beethoven Symphony
No. 9 in D Minor, Op. 125
"The Choral"
Tessa Uys and Ben Schoeman
St Michaels' Church – 30th June 2018**

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Transcription for four hands by Franz Xaver Scharwenka

i Allegro ma non troppo, un poco maestoso

ii Molto vivace- Presto

iii Adagio molto e cantabile- Andante moderato

iv Finale: Presto- Allegro assai- Alla marcia: Allegro vivace assai- Andante maestoso- Adagio non troppo, ma divoto- Allegro energico, sempre ben marcato- Allegro ma non tanto- Poco adagio- Poco allegro, stringendo il tempo- Prestissimo

If there is one work for which Beethoven is best known, it must surely be his monumental Ninth Symphony, composed between 1822-24 and arguably the most profound and moving of his symphonies. Although its revolutionary form and extreme technical difficulties mean that full appreciation of this iconic work was slow to form, by the 19th many of the great composers considered it to be the central inspiration for their creative voices. Its influence continues unabated today: when the Berlin Wall fell in 1989, Leonard Bernstein conducted a legendary performance with a composite cast of musicians from all over the world.

There are a number of anecdotes about the premier, some suggesting that it was under-rehearsed and rather ragged in execution, others reporting that it was a huge success. By this time, Beethoven was almost completely deaf and, although he was billed as the conductor of the new symphony, and he did indeed appear to beat time and turn the pages of his score (according to some accounts gesticulating furiously, at times rising, at other times shrinking to the ground), the players had been cautioned beforehand to pay no attention to him and to follow the discreet, utterly reliable beat of the concertmaster, Michael Umlauf. In one of the most famous accounts in all music when the audience burst into applause at the end, Beethoven, who of course couldn't hear the ovation, stood with his back to the crowd, leafing through his score. Only when the contralto soloist, Carolyn Unger, touched him on the shoulder and turned him around to see his public applauding wildly, waving hands, handkerchiefs and hats in the air, did he realize the enormous ovation his masterpiece had produced.

In an age when CDs, iPods, Spotify and YouTube were unknown, and live concerts the prerogative of the wealthy, transcriptions like this evening's performance reflect what most people in the 19th century knew of this work and, indeed, of countless other orchestral masterworks.

Franz Xaver Scharwenka (1850-1924) began learning to play the piano by ear when he was three, Scharwenka did not start formal music studies until he was 15. He travelled widely as a piano virtuoso and scored a considerable success in England in both this capacity and that of composer. He was an exceedingly fine pianist, an inspiring teacher, and a composer of symphonies, piano concerti and an opera (performed at the Met, New York), as well as a quantity of instrumental music, including the transcriptions for piano duet for four hands of all the 9 Symphonies of Beethoven.

Tessa Uys was born in Cape Town and gave her first public performance at the age of seven. She first studied with her mother Helga Bassel and at 16 won an Associated Board Scholarship to study at the Royal Academy of Music in London where she won several prestigious prizes. Shortly after this she was the first prize winner and gold medalist of the Royal Over-Seas League Music Competition. She has enjoyed the unusual distinction of working with the film director John Schlesinger on his film *Madame Sousatzka*, starring Shirley MacLaine. In 1994, she was elected an Associate of the Royal Academy of Music. Tessa has performed in many different countries and has broadcast frequently on the BBC. Tessa discovered the complete transcriptions of Beethoven's Symphonies by Scharwenka amongst her mother's scores.

The South African pianist and Steinway Artist **Ben Schoeman** has won several awards, including the first grand prize in the 11th UNISA International Piano Competition, Pretoria (2008), the gold medal in the Royal Over-Seas League Music Competition, London (2009), the contemporary music prize at the Cleveland International Piano Competition, USA (2013), and the Rupert Prize from the South African Academy of Arts and Sciences (2016). He has given solo, chamber music and concerto performances in many prestigious concert halls. In 2016, he obtained a doctorate in music from City University (London) and the Guildhall School of Music & Drama with a thesis on the piano works of the eminent South African composer Stefans Grové. His solo album, featuring works of Franz Liszt, was released by TwoPianists Records.

