



Robert P. Miles - Al Ueltschi Tribute,
Mahler For Vision Concert Introduction,
Carnegie Hall,
Feb. 13, 2017

Introduction Transcript



Robert P. Miles giving the Introduction at Carnegie Hall.

Al Ueltschi Tribute, Mahler For Vision Concert Introduction, Carnegie Hall, Feb 13, 2017

Tonight, we are here to support Help Me See, hear a concert and honor an outstanding man.

Wow so this is Carnegie Hall! While my mother and grandmother were both pianists, that musical gene skipped a generation, therefore I'm here not to perform, rather to share the extraordinary story of a humble man, Al Ueltschi, the founder of Help Me See. Al had purpose. Al had focus. And, Al was a visionary!

Al Ueltschi was an aviator, a pioneer, a business leader, a charitable man, and Al Ueltschi was a hero.

Let me take you back...

In 1927, at just 10 years old, while listening to the radio Al was inspired to be a pilot after hearing that Charles Lindbergh flew solo from New York to Paris.

As a teenager, he saved enough money to buy a used open cockpit airplane and mostly taught himself to fly. While training another pilot on inverted flight, Al's seat became unfastened and fell out of his own airplane. Fortunately for Al, the student pilot righted the plane and landed safely and fortunately for us, Al had a parachute and landed unharmed. And that gave Al another idea - pilot training was a lot safer on the ground than it was in the air.

Then he became a Pan Am pilot where he flew privately for founder, Juan Trippe and dignitaries including that boyhood hero Charles Lindbergh as well as General Dwight Eisenhower.

In 1951, recognizing the need for ground based simulator pilot training, Al mortgaged his home for thousands and started FlightSafety here at LaGuardia Airport where they are still headquartered today.

Al grew FlightSafety into the world's premier pilot training organization, training some 75,000 pilots a year. Already a member of the Forbes 400 richest, Al sold his business in 1996 to Warren Buffett's Berkshire Hathaway for over a billion.

Along with Buffett and Bill Gates, Al Ueltschi signed the Giving Pledge. His family is carrying on what they now call the Living Pledge. Using simulators, Help Me See teaches doctors in developing countries. Regardless of gender, age, race or religious beliefs, Help Me See unites our global humanity to restore vision and resurrect sight and therefore life.

As a father to a daughter, Al and his eye restoration work touched my heart when I saw a video of a 7 year old girl living in Bangladesh who was permanently blind in one eye because of a cataract, who couldn't read the chalkboard, stopped going to school because she was teased by kids, about to go blind in the other eye, when she was miraculously saved with simple surgery.

So the hero we honor today with the music of light and life began his life with sight, for without it he could have never become a pilot, never saved millions of lives through safe pilot training, never saved millions of lives through eye surgical simulators.

And yet he did.

It's said that a man's character can be measured by how he treats others who can do nothing for him in return. Character is exactly what Al Ueltschi embodied during his lifetime and still embodies with his legacy - Help Me See.

Thank you for joining me on a journey back through Al's life, as an aviation and sight restoration pioneer, who used technology to solve problems and save lives and never missed an opportunity to help others.

This Concert for Vision highlights a united nations of musicians playing together to benefit our fellow human beings. How fitting they would use their gift of sound to help us see how restoring vision can resurrect life. Please join me in welcoming George Mathew, artistic director of Music for Life International and the conductor of Mahler for Vision.

CARNEGIE HALL



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FEBRUARY 2017

Monday Evening, February 13, 2017, at 8:00
Isaac Stern Auditorium / Ronald O. Perleman Stage

MUSIC FOR LIFE INTERNATIONAL

presents

MAHLER FOR VISION

A Concert for the Restoration of Vision

Net proceeds to benefit
HELPMESEE

Introduced by JACOB MOHAN THAZHATHU,
President and CEO of HelpMeSee, Inc.

Opening Remarks by ROBERT MILES,
Executive in Residence, University of Nebraska Omaha

THE MAHLER FOR VISION ORCHESTRA
GEORGE MATHEW, *Artistic Director and Conductor*
ELMIRA DARVAROVA, *Concertmaster and Solo Violin*
INDRA THOMAS, *Soprano*
SUSANNE MENTZER, *Mezzo-soprano*
With Singers from MASTEROICES
TED SPERLING, *Artistic Director*

GUSTAV MAHLER (1860-1911) Symphony No. 2 in C minor, *Resurrection* (1888-94)

- I. Allegro maestoso. Mit durchaus ernstem und feierlichem Ausdruck (With complete gravity and solemnity of expression)
- II. Andante maestoso. Sehr gemächlich. Nie eilen. (Very leisurely. Never rush.)
- III. In ruhig fließender Bewegung (With quietly flowing movement)
- IV. Urlicht (Primeval Light). Sehr feierlich, aber schlicht (Very solemn, but simple)
- V. Im Tempo des Scherzos (In the tempo of the scherzo)

PLEASE SWITCH OFF YOUR CELL PHONES AND OTHER ELECTRONIC DEVICES.