



The Holy See

CONCERT FOR THE HOLY FATHER'S 80th BIRTHDAY

ADDRESS OF HIS HOLINESS BENEDICT XVI

*Paul VI Audience Hall
Monday, 16 April 2007*

*Your Eminences,
Venerable Brothers in the Episcopate and in the Priesthood,
Distinguished Ladies and Gentlemen,
Dear Friends,*

At the end of this marvellous concert at which the *Stuttgart* Radio and Television Symphony Orchestra have offered us a gift by uplifting our hearts, I would like to greet you all warmly.

I thank Minister Willi Stächele and Prof. Peter Voss, Director of the *Südwestrundfunks*, for their courteous words to me at the beginning.

I willingly and joyfully accepted your musical gift, this marvellous Birthday present from Southwest Germany, especially because the Baden-Württemberg Land is linked to an important and formative phase of my life. The Minister has already mentioned my roots.

In fact, I willingly think back to my years at Tübingen, to the intellectual and scientific exchange in that university and the many precious meetings with people which I had there and which continued for years and decades and are still taking place.

Above all, I would now like to thank the musicians of this evening's event, the members of the *Stuttgarter Radio-Sinfonieorchesters*, the *SWR*, who with their skill have offered us all an authentic experience of the inspiring power of great music.

I thank Gustavo Dudamel, the conductor, and Hilary Hahn, the soloist, and all of you, Ladies and Gentlemen. Since the language of music is universal, we see people from completely different cultural and religious backgrounds who let themselves be gripped and likewise guided by it and who also interpret it.

Today, this universal aspect of music is given special emphasis, thanks to the electronic and digital instruments of communications. How many people there are in the most diverse countries who are able to take part in this musical performance at home, or experience it later!

I am convinced that music - and here I am thinking in particular of the great Mozart and this evening, of course, of the marvellous music by Gabrieli and the majestic "New World" by Dvorák - really is the universal language of beauty which can bring together all people of good will on earth and get them to lift their gaze on high and open themselves to the Absolute Good and Beauty whose ultimate source is God himself.

In looking back over my life, I thank God for placing music beside me, as it were, as a travelling companion that has offered me comfort and joy. I also thank the people who from the very first years of my childhood brought me close to this source of inspiration and serenity.

I thank those who combine music and prayer in harmonious praise of God and his works: they help us glorify the Creator and Redeemer of the world, which is the marvellous work of his hands.

This is my hope: that the greatness and beauty of music will also give you, dear friends, new and continuous inspiration in order to build a world of love, solidarity and peace.

For this I invoke upon us who are gathered this evening in the Vatican and upon everyone who is linked to us via radio and television the constant protection of God, of that God of love who desires to kindle ceaselessly in our hearts the flame of good, and to feed it with his grace. May he, the Lord and Giver of new and definitive life, whose victory we are joyfully celebrating in this Easter Season, bless you all!

I thank you once again for your presence and for your good wishes.

A Happy Easter Season to everyone!

Thank you!

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