Columbus Premiere of Malcolm Cochran’s *Requiem* at Historic East Main Street Church

Malcolm Cochran’s *Requiem*—the artist’s first sculptural installation to incorporate live music—will be presented this fall at Rock of Faith Baptist Church, 1667 East Main Street. The work offers a memorial to victims of genocide, massacres, and warfare, and to persons who have suffered from social and economic injustice and exploitation.

*Requiem* merges the mundane and discarded—used refrigerators repurposed as coffin-like sculptures—with live and recorded performances of ancient, classical, and contemporary *a cappella* songs without words performed by eight female vocalists, joined by members of the former church choir. By conjuring images and emotions associated with genocides, *Requiem’s* "enigmatic objects and transcendent music have added resonance in the aftermath of the COVID-19 pandemic, the Black Lives Matter movement, and most recently the war in Ukraine,” says Cochran.

*Requiem* is free and open to the public on five consecutive Sundays this fall. Programs begin at 2 p.m. with doors opening at 1:30 p.m.

- Sept. 25: live vocal performance with opening remarks by artist Malcolm Cochran, reception
- Oct. 2: recorded vocal performance and a speaker on Genocide
- Oct. 9: live vocal performance and panel discussion on Remembrance & Reckoning
- Oct. 16: recorded vocal performance and panel discussion on Rebirth
- Oct. 23: live vocal performance with closing remarks by artist Malcolm Cochran

From its inception, Cochran envisioned this project traveling to venues that would contribute to and enrich the impact of the work. Buildings hold history and stories, and the setting and community connections of Rock of Faith Baptist Church offer an exceptional basis for realizing this aspiration. The church’s long-unused main sanctuary, with its soaring vaulted ceiling, will be a meditative setting for *Requiem*. Built in 1916, the church was home to the thriving Holy Rosary Catholic congregation in the early- and mid-20th century and the active Rock of Faith Baptist congregation since 1983.
Learning the history of the church and of the South of Main neighborhood convinced Cochran that it is vitally important to draw connections between the global atrocities that initially inspired *Requiem* and the insidious genocide that has occurred in real time for decades in this long-neglected neighborhood. Especially important to his understanding was that the adjacent Rectory, a farmhouse built 1840, was part of the Underground Railroad; nearby Hanford Village was a predominantly Black enclave founded in 1902, and New Hanford Village was built in 1946 to provide homes for returning Black Tuskegee Airmen not permitted to live on Lockbourne Air Force Base. The coup de grace was when Interstate 70 buried part of the neighborhood in the early 1960s, cutting it in half north-to-south, and forever changing this corner of Columbus. The programs that accompany the performances explore and expand on the critical issues of injustice and genocide in the context of the adjacent neighborhood.

Rock of Faith Community Development Corp. (ROFCDC) was formed in 2003 to work with Pastor Bob Duckens to determine the future of the church, its adjacent buildings, and three-acre site. Earlier this year, they entered into an agreement with the developer, Equity, to preserve and develop the site. Equity’s “initial goals are to preserve the architecture and put the church congregation on a firm foundation with a place to worship.” Equity subsequently hopes to “stimulate the revitalization of the surrounding neighborhood, considerably improving the built environment while benefiting the people in the community.”

Mike Howard, Executive Director of the ROFCDC says, “This is what we hope will be a watershed moment for the rebirth of South of Main. Our first opportunity to open the doors of the long-shuttered sanctuary will shine a light on the past, present, and future of this historic neighborhood through related programs on Black life in this long-neglected corner of Columbus."

“*Requiem* is not a balm or a solution,” says Cochran. “The work encourages listening and contemplation at a time when we need to create opportunities for coming together and reflection. In this location, I hope the work and related programming will be a catalyst for uplifting the neighborhood by honoring and reckoning with its history, present condition, and potential for rebirth.”

*Requiem* is funded by the Greater Columbus Arts Council, the Ohio Arts Council, and The Ohio State University Emeritus Academy. In-kind partners include Columbus Landmarks Foundation, Columbus Museum of Art, ROFCDC, and Equity. The support of these organizations demonstrates the multifocal significance and appeal of the *Requiem* performances for the South of Main neighborhood and for arts and architectural enthusiasts and community activists from throughout Ohio and beyond.

For more information on *Requiem*, contact Jennifer McNally at 614-489-8118 or jlmcnally@gmail.com.