

Michael Goodwin

Funeral Service

Saturday, February 11, 2012

Minister Steven Dambeck's Introduction

We are here to celebrate the life of our beloved friend, Michael Goodwin, and to express our gratitude for the privilege of having shared our lives with him. We welcome Michael's brother David and his wife Margot; and his sister Wendy watching from Australia with her husband Paul. We also welcome a number of Michael's friends and comrades from the Auburn Symphony, whose sense of shared purpose was so important to Michael, and whose friendship gave him such joy.

At the death of a friend, we can see their life as a whole. In Michael's case, this whole feels both finished and harmonious. A symphony, if you will, moving in time through different movements and moods, yet unified by a few great, central themes: of discipline, service, and, above all, absolute commitment to the presence that connects one to God.

Let us stand, and honor Michael with our silent presence.

(Silence)

Losing Michael is an impossibility that has become a reality. The final note of Michael's life, now reverberating so deeply in our hearts, carries pain and loss. But it does not carry anguish or doubt. This final, summing chord nourishes us deeply. As the pain and loss fade, as with time they will, the heart will be left wiser, kinder and more focused on the truly important.

Michael was deeply aware that he was not the composer of his life. When he was called upon to conduct an orchestra, he did so from his vision and to his standards; but in leading his own life, he left the design and guidance to a baton in a higher hand.

And this is the secret behind all that he has given us: his accomplishments, great as they were, were great not because of what was on the surface, but because of his continual inner work: great not for what they were, but for who he was. Increasingly, the moments and the efforts of his life were lit from within.

Music: Rebekah Hood and Marina Swales

Schubert, Sonata Arpeggione II

Reading: Robert Taylor

William Shakespeare, *Sonnet 73*

That time of year thou may'st in me behold
When yellow leaves, or none, or few, do hang
Upon those boughs which shake against the cold,
Bare ruin'd choirs, where late the sweet birds sang.
In me thou seest the twilight of such day
As after sunset fadeth in the west,
Which by and by black night doth take away,
Death's second self, that seals up all in rest.
In me thou see'st the glowing of such fire
That on the ashes of his youth doth lie,
As the death-bed whereon it must expire
Consumed with that which it was nourish'd by.

This thou perceivest, which makes thy love more strong,
To love that well which thou must leave ere long

Eulogy: Marcus Lasken

Michael Goodwin, 1946-2012

Michael's life here at Apollo was as vital as one of the colors in the rainbow. He was naturally part of us. As natural as a warm summer day under a great spreading oak. We remember him so well, he was established here so firmly, and for so long, that we took it for granted he would always be with us. We remember his energetic figure, conducting at innumerable musical events. We remember sparkling, insightful conversations. We remember his delightful grin at making very obvious puns, and his glorious re-invention of the lyrics from Mariachi songs. We remember that he was ageless, that he loved watching trains, that his announcements were pitch perfect between *reminding* you and *telling* you. And we remember his love, his love for his Teacher, for his friends and comrades, and for the arts, especially for music.

He was a pioneer of culture, a father of the arts. He brought a level of culture to northern California, unseen outside of the Bay Area. The aim of his concerts was to raise the audience into their better selves. He helped shape Apollo into the blessed community that it is today.

Apollo will always be more because of his efforts, and it will be less without him. Through him, we see how much a single person can contribute.

His love and inspiration extended far beyond Apollo. He helped raise and support our neighbors, the Auburn Symphony orchestra, to their own standard of excellence. Top musicians went there for the opportunity of working with him. They remember him for his principles, that he believed in the power of music to live eternally, a symbol of the eternity in each of us.

Yet he did not lose his child's heart. He delighted in creative musical programs for the community, for mature audiences as well as for children. His mind was lively, and always engaged. And he was always prepared. He sang along to the piano to get all the parts right, and recorded the parts for the musicians, *so that they would get it right*. And when he studied for a presentation, his favorite place was the rose garden, so much so, and so consistently, that he in turn became a favorite impression for our Teacher.

We could say more about Michael's achievements, his lasting legacy at Apollo, in Auburn and to those who he touched throughout the world. Yet the essence of his life is his presence. The inspiration of his life was living it through his soul. When he learned of self-remembering, he applied it to everything in his life, and to every moment that he could. The well-ordered, refined life that Michael created around him was the outer expression of an inner life, born from eternal principles. His inner and outer man was harmonized because he desired the best for others, a reflection of the excellence he sought in himself.

Now we must be divided from him, now we must part. Yes, there is faith; that although this is a time for separation, a time will come when we are reunited. But this is a time of separation because of another truth. It is because nothing can contain the growth of the soul.

Rilke calls presence, 'an imageless act, an act that always seeks new limits'.

Michael outgrew his life. He knew, his Higher Self knew, that it was time. Michael said at a recent meeting, 'We do everything we can to get to paradise, but ultimately, how we get there cannot be explained, except by Grace.' And it is true. It is grace that brings one safe so far, and it is grace that leads one home. The soul hears the music in the next room, yearns for it and God opens the door.

What remains cannot be said in words. The limitless beckons you. For the ascending soul, there is no death.

Music: Zoila Munoz, Marla Volovna, Marina Swales, Anicca Bat Adam, Dionisio Martinez, Noah Horstock

Cesar Frank, Panis Angelicus

Reading: Karen Johnston

Rumi, *A Pilgrimage to a Person*

When you are not with close friends,
you are not in the presence.

It is sad to leave the people you travel with.
How much more so those who remind you of God.
Hurry back to the ones protecting you.

On every trip, have only one objective,
to meet those who are friends
inside the presence.

If you stay home, keep the same purpose,
to meet the innermost presence
as it lives in people.

Be a pilgrim to the kaaba inside a human being,
and Mecca will rise into view on its own.

Minister Steven Dambeck's Conclusion:

It is time to bid our friend farewell. May Michael's eagerness to serve inspire us to fulfill our own allotted tasks with greater dedication and selflessness. May his commitment to presence inspire us to greater urgency, and to sharing more moments of presence together. May the love he bore each of us deepen our love for each other. And may the music he leaves in our hearts be a continual source of joy and inspiration. His work is done. Ours is to let him go. With tremendous gratitude, Michael, friend, brother, teacher, Maestro: we thank thee.

Minister Steven Dambeck's Introduction at the Cemetery

Here on this beautiful day and in this blessed place, we gather to return Michael's ashes to the earth. His play on earth is complete; he is released to his, and our, true home.

Reading: James Kowalick

Walt Whitman, *Beginning my studies*

Beginning my studies, the first step pleased me so much,
The mere fact consciousness, these forms, the power of motion,
The least insect or animal, the senses, eyesight, love,
The first step I say awed me and pleased me so much,
I have hardly gone and hardly wished to go any farther,
But stop and loiter all the time to sing it in ecstatic songs.

Urn bearer puts urn in the grave.

Minister Steven Dambeck's Last Invocation

At the last, tenderly,
From the walls of the powerful fortress'd house,
From the clasp of the knitted locks, from the keep of the well-closed doors,
Let me be wafted.

Let me glide noiselessly forth;
With the key of softness unlock the locks; with a whisper,
Set open the doors, O soul.

Minister's Conclusion

Minister and company take rose petals.

The earth returns to the earth, and a divine spark returns to its divine source. 'Love comes from eternity, and returns into eternity.' The circle of life is complete.

Minister and company put rose petals into the grave.

Let us join together in saying farewell.

Rose petals in the grave. The leaving begins.