

INTERNATIONAL  
**Herald Tribune**

## 78-year-old Oscar honoree finally makes his conducting debut in America

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### UNITED NATIONS

Ennio Morricone, who has been performing for some six decades and is heading to Hollywood to pick up a long-awaited Academy Award, finally made his conducting debut on the shores of the United States.

The night before his first official U.S. concert at Radio City, the 78-year-old Italian conducted the Rome Sinfonietta Orchestra on Friday night in a performance for invited guests who filled the U.N. General Assembly hall.

Morricone, whose iconic theme from "The Good, the Bad and the Ugly" is among his more than 400 film scores, picks up an honorary Oscar at the end of the month after being passed over by the Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences five times.

On Friday night, his mission was to honor the United Nations. Morricone dedicated the performance to the U.N. staff and their labors for peace.

"Maestro Morricone, all of us working on this formidable task deeply appreciate this gesture of solidarity," said new Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon, who returned only two hours earlier from a nine-day, 11-nation tour.

"Your music is a (portrait of) the United Nations. It is full of drama. It has the illusion to tell stories about people with deep dreams. It has also shown us the good, the bad and the ugly."

The program's first piece, "Voices from Silence," confronted the bad and the ugly. Morricone wrote the cantata after the Sept. 11 attacks, dedicating it to all victims of war and brutality.

It begins with the rumble of the cellos that's answered by ominous passages of wavering winds, then a rush of high strings. The tension mounts as the winds of war start to blow.

Sustained high strings blur the picture with quiet eeriness.

After an ominous diminuendo, a trombone pronounces the ugliness of conflict, and a speaker proclaims the text by Richard Rive:

"Where the rainbow ends there's going to be a place, brother, where the world can sing all sorts of songs. And we're going to sing together, brother, you and I, though you're white and I'm not. It's going to be a sad song, however, because we don't know the tune, and it's a difficult tune to learn. But we can learn brother, you and I. There's no such thing as a black tune, there's no such tune as a white tune. There's only music, brother, and it's music that we are going to sing, where the rainbow ends."

Primordial vocal sounds follow against elongated and dissonant chords.

Recorded sounds of chants, from the Middle East and elsewhere, punctuate the chords as the live choirs sing their own lingering wordless notes.



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Maddening chaos breaks out like a storm, building to horrible dissonance of machinegun-like drums and shrieks.

Then the cathartic moment.

The storm subsides suddenly. The tension is released and a rainbow appears — Morricone's "Falls" melody from his Oscar-nominated score the 1986 movie "The Mission."

As the speaker said, it is a sad song, seemingly asking, "Why?" The 27-minute piece ends on a leading tone — failing to provide an answer.

The good followed the bad and the ugly after intermission, with Morricone leading the orchestra in some of his tonal film music, starting with the theme from Brian De Palma's Vietnam movie "Casualties of War."

The program was not all solemn — there was the Gospel-like "Abolicao" from the 1969 movie "Queimada," the uplifting Respighiesque "Scattered Sheets," the joyful theme from 1969 Italian comedy "H2S" and the sly song from 1969 movie "The Sicilian Clan."

The final pieces on the program were the Morricone classics from 1986 movie "The Mission" — "Gabriel's Oboe" "Falls" and "In Heart as it is in Heaven."

After a four-minute standing ovation, Morricone and the orchestra performed music from his spaghetti Westerns, including "Once Upon a Time in the West," "Ecstasy of Gold" and of course — the coyote theme from "The Good, the Bad and the Ugly."

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