

European Conference: Science and Music Launch New Campaign for Verdi Tuning

Speaking at a conference of the Schiller Institute in Oberwesel, Germany on the weekend of July 25, Italian musician Arturo Sacchetti, an organist, choir and orchestra conductor, and former artistic director of Vatican Radio, made a proposal for expanding the campaign for scientific, Verdi tuning to musical instruments, which the Schiller Institute began in 1988, around the commemoration of the 100th anniversary of composer Giuseppe Verdi's death.

Maestro Sacchetti described his proposal as follows:

"Soon, an historic event will take place. On Jan. 30, 1901, Verdi died; in the year 2001, will be the 100th anniversary of his death. And this fashionable event has already unleashed many initiatives to celebrate Verdi. It is obvious from what I have been saying, that a revival of his operas will convey a false idea, unless they are played at the tuning he wanted.

"For this reason, we worked out a project, which will be presented very soon, to celebrate Verdi in 2001 in his



Maestro Arturo Sacchetti calls for expansion of the campaign for Verdi musical tuning, flanked by the Schiller Institute's Liliana Gorini and Anno Hellenbroich.

own town of Busseto, Italy, in order to propose the performance of Verdi operas at A=432 Hz, both for instruments and for voices. This revival will be fundamental to rediscovering the vocal and instrumental sound of Verdi."

"This project has been inspired by Mr. Lyndon LaRouche and his book *A Manual on the Rudiments of Tuning and Registration*, which in Italian appeared as *Canto e Diapason*, and which demonstrates the question of tuning in relation to each of the four voices. The Busseto project aims at recovering Verdi's operas, performing them at A=432 Hz. It is a rigorous project, because the idea is to create a stock of instruments which are strictly tuned to A=432. This stock of instruments will be put at the disposal of young musicians who come to Busseto to learn how to play at the Verdi tuning, in a kind of permanent master-class.

"The instrumental part of the master-class will be to teach instrumentalists, and also conductors. After a period of studying and practicing this tuning, instrumentalists will be joined by singers of the *bel canto* academy of Maestro Carlo Bergonzi, who has been holding regular *bel canto* master-classes in Busseto for many years.

"This is a Verdi project which aims at creating, for the first time in history, a

permanent orchestra tuned to A=430. This orchestra shall be joined by solo and choral voices in the performance of Verdi works.

"This project will unleash a lot of polemics. Mainly, because a part of the international music world supports the high tuning, without any scientific motivation, but stating that voices should adapt to the tuning of the instruments. The results of their performances are not coherent with the music world of the time of the composers. Therefore, not only works of Verdi, but all vocal, instrumental, chamber, and oratorio works of the Nineteenth century, so performed, do not correspond to the will of the composers.

"The most famous singers endorsed our campaign to go back to the Verdi tuning. With this Busseto project, we aim at achieving performances which respect scientifically, musically, and from the standpoint of interpretation, the creativity and intent of the composers."

The Schiller Institute has undertaken to support Maestro Sacchetti's project, by circulating a petition asking for endorsements from famous musicians, as with its international petition for lower tuning, first circulated in 1988. The petition draft appears on page 112 of this issue.

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group had come to completely different conclusions from those of Helmholtz's postulation (on the basis of Rameau's theory) of the so-called "resonance theory" of hearing. Their conclusions appear in the Schiller Institute's internationally released *Manual on the Rudiments of Tuning and Registration*.

Using the famous motif from *A Musical Offering* by J.S. Bach as an example, Hellenbroich demonstrated how Mozart and Beethoven had worked this motif into their compositions. In this connection, Hellenbroich emphasized the importance of educating the population at large for "active hearing."

Hellenbroich's remarks are included in the published Proceedings of the conference.