
Dialogue

Bringing Great Music to All the World

Here are excerpts from the discussion following the panel on May 28. Dr. Jozef Miklosko was vice prime minister in the first post-communist government of Czechoslovakia, and is now vice rector of the University of Trnava, Slovakia. Dr. Ladislav Mokry is a Professor of Music History in Bratislava. Anno Hellenbroich is an Executive Committee member of the ICLC in Wiesbaden, Germany and leads the music research; soprano Liliana Gorini takes a leading role in the ICLC's music work in Europe.

Working on Bach during the Communist Era

Dr. Jozef Miklosko: My first question to Professor Vyazkova, is whether you did all of this analysis of the Bach works just alone, “by hand,” or if you used a computer to analyze the scores and the composition, as has become possible today.

My second question is, that with Bach one must speak about God and eternity, and the soul, and so forth. How was it possible, in the communist period, to study and to convey this in work with students? In Czechoslovakia, one had only to utter the word “God,” and things became problematic. How could you work on these themes?

Prof. Yelena Vyazkova: On the first question, on whether I worked on all this alone, or not: In 1974, an edition of *The Art of the Fugue* was published in Russia, edited by Kopchevsky. In his introduction to that edition, he noted the main controversial questions, the things that were not understood. He wrote that there was an autograph, kept in Berlin, which had the following ordering of the fugues and canons, but that it was not understood why that was the ordering, rather than some other ordering. He himself, unfortunately, used the edition of Graeser, the well-known editor, whose conception was hegemonic for 50 years or so in musicology abroad, but somehow gave an incorrect ordering of the pieces. My ideas, to some extent, were born in debate with him. At the same time, it was through him that I found out for the first time, in 1974, that such a problem existed, although I had been working on the analysis of the cycle since somewhat earlier. The first publication about it, in Russian, was that introduction. Nobody in Russia was studying *The Art of the Fugue*, and I had the good fortune to delve more deeply into this problem, on my own, without

any help from the outside—with the exception of Bach’s own hints.

I think that it was always possible to study Bach, despite the themes of “God,” “the soul,” and so forth. These themes were not particularly raised. People began to study Bach more thoroughly, later, in the 1980s. What you had earlier, was on the level of what we call “musical literature,” which is descriptive, concerning how something is structured, in general terms, not specialized language, so that the it would be accessible to non-specialists.

Things were more difficult, with Beethoven. Our musicologist Fishman, when he first published a book of Beethoven’s sketches, which included Beethoven’s sketches for *Christ on the Mount of Olives*. Natan Lvovich Fishman wrote almost nothing about that oratorio, just ten pages. He told me, in a personal conversation, that it would be impossible to develop that theme thoroughly in our time. The whole publication could have been stopped. That was in the early 1960s. But things were always calmer, with Bach. The historical gap was too big, between our time and Bach’s, between our time and the Baroque era, so there were essentially no forbidden areas.

Miklosko: And, about using a computer?

Vyazkova: No, everything is by hand. We don’t have computers like that. Do you? I’ll have to come visit you!

Celebrate Bach’s 250th Anniversary

Prof. Ladislav Mokry: I would like to situate the four speeches that we heard yesterday and today, in a larger process, which is ongoing, and that is the new image of Bach. Since 1950, more or less, as we gained access to the source material, we tried not only to understand Bach better, but also to lend new meaning to his work. And, in this sense, I think this conference has made an essential contribution, from many points of view, in every case, very useful and very fundamental.

So, I am very grateful that we have, in this manner, carried forward the task which today’s musicology has to fulfill. The first to be undertaken, is the study of the manuscripts, which had remained unknown for a long period of time. This was done by Philipp Spitta, who published the biography of Bach that was considered the ultimate that could be said about Bach. The new Bach edition that was completed in 1900, was also considered the last word on Bach. Today, there is a new edition, which is essentially different because Bach is understood better. Some things had sometimes been wrongly interpreted, are better understood now, for example. . . .

It is often the case that Bach, naturally many times reformulated elements in a way that is very deep. The “O Haupt voll Blut und Wunden,” which Ortrun played for us, was originally a soldiers’ song. What came out, was part of the artistic maturity which Bach achieved, not only in this case, but more generally.

It is therefore, today, the task to present the new image of Bach, with so many manifolds and so much significance, that one not only thereby understands Bach better, but also can disseminate his works much better.

For this reason, in my country, we have put a certain process into motion: We want, on July 28, the 250th anniversary of the death of Bach, to hold 250 concerts of his music. And in every concert, the *Jesu Meine Freude* will be presented. There are three different versions of this: one for the small church organ, and two others, which are more difficult; through them one can understand the connections of this work. This will be presented in 250 places, not only to hold concerts, but also to make people aware that Bach exists, and that not only can one work with his music today, but one should.

Interestingly, this initiative, though not yet realized, has become well known, and the Council of Europe has endorsed our initiative, and we are looking, so to speak, at the last minute, to organize 250 more concerts in Europe. We have made contact with a publisher, who has published the three different versions of the *Jesu Meine Freude* in a pamphlet, and made it available to us free of charge. So if any of you want to have this, we can send it to you.

Anno Hellenbroich: I am very thankful that Professor Mokry made these remarks, because he had suggested a while ago, that the international Schiller Institute prepare a seminar; one fruit, is this panel this morning, at the international conference. We have to think, how we can pick up his suggestion, this year.

I might make one remark, concerning a different aspect, to which Dr. Mokry referred, which is how we can have an impact on the general public, in terms of the understanding of this history of music, of which some examples were shown this morning. I want to refer to this project, which LaRouche launched a while ago, together with his friends in Italy, with Dr. Arturo Sacchetti and others, concerning the “Verdi Year,” next year. I actually would like Liliana to say, very briefly, where we are, because I think it is very relevant for the general music development. That will happen next year, and it is centered around the question of the *bel canto* voice studies, the traditional studies in this respect. I would like Liliana to introduce this.

The Campaign for a Lower Tuning

Liliana Gorini: The project, as people who were in Oberwesel last year may remember, because we presented it with Maestro Sacchetti (the former artistic director of Vatican Radio, who has developed a youth orchestra), was launched actually by Mr. LaRouche. The idea was, for the first time in history, to perform an opera by Verdi in the original key, which means in the lower tuning, which has not been used since Verdi introduced, in 1884, the lower tuning (A=432) as law, in Italy.¹ After that, Verdi has always

been performed a quarter- to a half-tone higher. Actually, in Berlin, Salzburg, and other cities, even more than that, because they went higher, to A=450.

The project consists in presenting the idea of the lower tuning, with a conference, and then performing an opera. Actually, the idea is to perform even two of Verdi’s operas from the time when he did this law (so these would be youth operas), with the youth orchestra, which will be trained by Maestro Sacchetti. This means at least six months of work with these young people, to teach them to play at the lower tuning, which means, for them, educating their ear, and also their sense of music, the interpretation. Sacchetti is an expert in that, because he has a very good idea, while Carlo Bergonzi, who is the tenor who gives a master class for Verdi voices in [Verdi’s hometown] Busseto, will teach the singers to sing lower, which is easier for the singer. Actually, for the singer it is much better, because they are getting killed by the high tuning.

After this work, which is done separately—the orchestra will work with Maestro Sacchetti and the singers with Carlo Bergonzi—the whole thing comes together with the performance of an opera in this beautiful Verdi theater in Busseto, which was inaugurated a few months ago. It has been renovated, and it will be put at the disposal of this project by the city of Busseto. The mayor and the cultural minister have endorsed the project, and will also endorse the conference.

The idea is not only to do this in the Verdi Year, for which the celebrations will start on Jan. 27, which is the death day of Verdi, but also to establish this as a permanent school for Verdi voices and Verdi instruments. As Sacchetti said, we have Baroque orchestras which do that repertoire, but we have never developed an orchestra which can perform operas at the lower tuning. So, this is the project, and obviously it will not only happen, but it should also be recorded, and taped, and remain as a very historic event, because this will be the first time an opera of Verdi will be performed in the real color, and in the real key Verdi wanted. It’s a good way to celebrate this year.

Hellenbroich: I would like to add that I invite music professionals and others, to give support to this internationally, because we know that there are some people around the Toscanini Foundation, I guess, who don’t like this initiative so much. I think we have to overwhelm them, with the fact that people want to have, in the country where Verdi was born and Verdi’s music is known, this performed in the original. I would like to invite those who are here, to get from Liliana the best addresses to which to send a letter of support and demand, to have this done. . . .

1. The scientific reasons behind the campaign for a lower tuning are explained in John Sigerson and Kathy Wolfe, eds., *A Manual on the Rudiments of Tuning and Registration*, Book I (Washington, D.C.: Schiller Institute, 1992).

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BOOK I:

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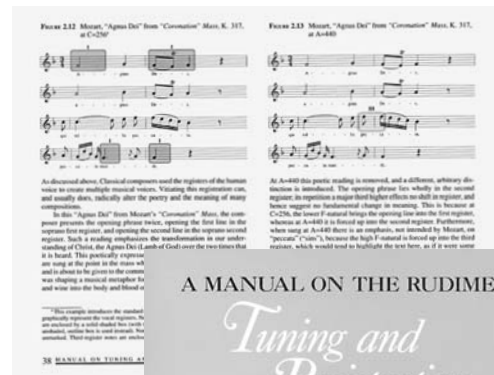
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—Norbert Brainin, founder and first violinist,
Amadeus Quartet

“. . . without any doubt an excellent initiative. It is particularly important to raise the question of tuning in connection with bel canto technique, since today’s high tuning misplaces all register shifts, and makes it very difficult for a singer to have the sound float above the breath. . . . What is true for the voice, is also true for instruments.”

—Carlo Bergonzi



As discussed above, Classical composers used the registers of the human voice to create multiple musical voices. Varying the register was, and usually does, indicate the pitch and the meaning of many compositions.

In the "Agnus Dei" from Mozart's "Così fan tutti" Mass, the composer presents the opening phrase twice, opening the first line in the soprano first register, and opening the second line in the soprano second register. Such a reading emphasizes the transformation in our understanding of Christ, the Agnus Dei, as Lamb of God over the two times that it is heard. This practically requires one being at the peak in the torso and is about to be given to the counter, was shaping a musical thought to and into the body and blood of

At A=440 this poetic reading is removed, and a different, arbitrary distinction is introduced. The opening phrase (as wholly as the second register) requires a major third higher effect to shift its register, and hence suggest no fundamental change in meaning. This is because at C=256, the lower F natural brings the opening line into the soprano register, whereas at A=440 it is forced up into the second register. Furthermore, when sung at A=440 there is an emphasis, not intended by Mozart, on "pecora" ("lamb"), because the high F natural is forced up into the third register, which would tend to highlight the next term, as if it were some

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Tuning and Registration



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