

Editorial

The Hope Of Great Music Reawakened

We are, as our founding Editor Lyndon LaRouche often says of himself, realists about this worst of economic and political times, but optimists that humanity can lift itself to a solution, as in great crises of the past. In the midst of the war clouds of the past week, has come great news for that human capability. Two extraordinary music performances within days of each other—one at the La Scala Opera House in Milan on Dec. 7, the other in León, Mexico on Nov. 27—featured the works of Verdi and other Classical composers, for both voice and orchestra, at approximately the Classic “Verdi tuning.”

In the La Scala performance of Verdi’s *Otello*, the famed tenor and Washington Opera director Placido Domingo sang the leading role. He had been among the first opera singers to endorse the campaign to return to the Verdi tuning, back in 1988, when the Schiller Institute brought together some of the world’s best singers and instrumentalists at Casa Giuseppe Verdi in Milan. Urged by LaRouche and other leaders of the Schiller Institute, they called for an end to the high-pitched, so-called “brilliant” tuning which had been destroying all but the very most gifted voices during the last century.

For this International Verdi Year of 2001, the Schiller Institute had long organized worldwide for a “Busetto Project”—to have Verdi performed in his home city, in the scientific tuning which reflects the poetic intentions of Verdi and all Classical composers for their music. LaRouche’s proposal to have an opera in the Verdi tuning to celebrate the Verdi year had been endorsed by many famous opera singers, among them tenor Carlo Bergonzi, soprano Mirella Freni, basso Ruggero Raimondi, and tenor Luis Alva. Though this goal ultimately was not achieved in Busetto, the widespread support of it was able to move conductor Riccardo Muti to take this step with Placido Domingo in La Scala’s last performance of the Verdi Year.

This decision to lower the tuning of one of the best of orchestras, involved a series of adaptations for the instruments—in particular, the wind instruments—and a commitment to musical truth from instrumentalists.

Their modern instruments are difficult to tune lower to achieve the full poetic effect which Verdi intended, and to allow the richer natural beauty of the registers of the human voice in this turning to be heard, with no forced effort from the singers. The orchestra’s members who made the effort said that they were very happy with this new *Otello* because the “sound is fuller, has more body, and is less pushed.”

Some 5,000 miles around the world at León, an extraordinary audience of 1,000 people heard the concert of operatic works by Verdi and orchestral works by Bach, Haydn, Mozart, and Rossini, all at the scientific tuning in which C=256 cycles per second, and A=432 cycles, not the 440-460 which are found all around the world today. The city’s newspaper reported that “of all the concerts to commemorate Verdi this year, this one comes closest to the original intention of the great opera creator. . . . The return to Classical tuning is one of the great artistic crusades on an international scale, being conducted by the Lyndon LaRouche-founded Schiller Institute.”

This return to the scientific, lower tuning used by the great Classical composers, for the great operatic works such as those of Verdi, has been the aim of the musical activities of the Schiller Institute for more the last decade-and-a-half. This goal has been pursued against all the modern musical “facts of life” and “public opinion,” for a reason fundamental to human transcendence in general. Science—here, the Classical science of tuning at C=256 cycles on the basis of discoveries which go back to the Renaissance and Kepler—is not independent of creative artistic expression. Rather, the creative emotion expressed in the greatest works of art, is nothing but the emotion of scientific discovery itself: That common emotion is *agapē*, the greatest of the three virtues St. Paul described in his letter to the Corinthians. No real revival of the love of Classical music and art can occur to lift up this tormented world, without that discovery. For this, the concerts in Italy and Mexico this past week were the advent of a new hope of future human progress.