

“Whereas by lowering the tuning pitch the sound of the orchestras would become ‘richer,’ especially that of the violins.”

The audience asked whether he had contacted the major orchestra conductors such as Muti and Abbado.

“I have not had a chance to speak with them, but the organizers of this conference have had contact with many orchestra musicians. What has emerged is their willingness to meet the singers halfway, but it is also true that many have put off serious discussion of the problem to the future. Technically speaking, we are already at the limit with this tuning, but many orchestra directors do not want to give up the position they have conquered and hence refuse to condescend to the demands of the singers. But today, unlike in the past, we singers are much more unified and we hope, above all based on the Bill presented on this occasion, to finally succeed in obtaining the natural tuning for orchestras.”

Finally Piero Cappuccilli was asked a question about the registral passage which is used “expressively” in *Macbeth* and about the influence which it would have on the character in the Verdi opera, if the passage took place on a different tone. The baritone answered: “If I pass that note with the natural tuning I can then develop it; but with the high tuning one cannot succeed in giving the needed dramatic quality to the character.”

## Fiorella Operto

# The challenge to become heroes

*From the welcoming remarks to the conference by the president of the Schiller Institute in Italy:*

It is no exaggeration to state that our conference is an historic event which the world will regard as the moment in the 20th century when the *bel canto* tradition was defended and advanced. As Italians we are all the happier that this conference is held in Milan, Verdi’s city.

In fact, the reintroduction of scientific standard pitch,

Bring About a Musical Renaissance!

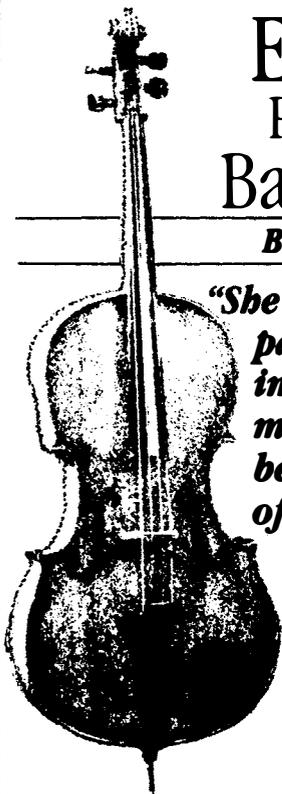
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(Antoine Goléa, *Témoignage Chrétien*, Paris, January 1979.)

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tuning orchestras to A = 432, around the world, will be an event of exceptional importance, not just in musical history, but in the history of humanity. This tuning is coherent with the laws of the functioning of the human voice, the "musical instrument of all musical instruments." The original tuning responds to precise scientific laws, which various systems in the universe obey, and by obeying them, man develops according to a general law which makes him both "beautiful and good." In fact, man's obedience to natural law, ethics, causes him to be ever more inclined to act according to his "own nature," created in the image of the Creator.

This struggle for perfection is, in man, immediately aesthetic; it is beauty in human history. Great classical music has the quality of communicating to the public the creative activity of the composer in the immediate form of the fundamental human emotion, that which distinguishes man from the beasts, the "divine spark" of mind. In listening to and in performing great works, one retraces the steps by which the composer created his work, which is the educational activity proper to human beings. I believe that everyone here in this room agrees with me on these questions, which are the basic principles of our culture, of Western civilization based on Christian humanism. But it often happens that, when one enters into a specific field of art, whether it be poetry, music, or the figurative arts, judgments diverge, and it seems that fundamental principles and the great laws which are the same for every human being, in every time and place, are no longer valid. Here arbitrariness, individualism, opinion seep in. First of all, opinion may appear to be an acceptable discussion between experts, it may seem as an acceptable difference of viewpoints, between sensible persons, in the name of "artistic freedom."

But, rather like the famous "Calumny" of Rossini, we have often seen how that same opinion and "freedom" turns into a cyclone, and becomes a brutal, demagogic, and totalitarian will. A similar cyclone hit Western culture in the first half of the 19th century, when the humanistic ideal of culture which educated patriotic citizens to the good and the beautiful was attacked by an arc of cultural tendencies which went from ethical liberalism to agnosticism, to cynicism to finally openly promoting the victory of Evil over Good. And, to capture a public which was, then, perhaps less naive than today's, the "liberalists" played all their seductive cards, the "new against tradition" [modernism], the most spectacular effects, the amazing, the bizarre, what had never been tried, and so forth. As the degeneration of culture progressed, the gap, the opposition between the anthropomorphic art of the Italian and European Renaissance and the "new art" of the most unscrupulous tendencies, widened.

Whereas at one time the human voice was the paragon of beauty in music, the new music went further and further from that; that led to the race to higher tuning which has led to the excesses of A = 450 in some halls. While at one time the human figure was considered the artistic "model" closest to

perfection, and hence to God, the new art cut it into pieces, turned it upside down, rejected it in favor of machines, and finally killed it. In a certain sense, the unscrupulous use of the mass media, whose devastating effects we see today, and the counterculture, began then. Christian values were overturned. The well-known German scholar Fr. Ambrosius Eszter, of Rome, in an interview in the Schiller Institute's review *Ibykus* on the Blessed Edith Stein, mentions that Stein repeatedly criticized that trend, which dominated German philosophy after the Congress of Vienna. Professor Eszter writes: "Wagner's operas are a vehicle for his racist, neo-pagan, amoral, and fatalist ideals. In *Parsifal*, the hero cannot join with Kundry, in the figure of which appears the Jewish Herodias, and which moreover represents the Catholic Church . . . because she would pollute his Arian blood. . . . In this way, the Christ epoch *Parsifal* of W. von Eschenbach was secularized and rewritten in a pagan way. In the same sense, Wagner eliminated the Christian elements from the medieval *Nibelungenlied*. Wagner's work is to be located in the atmosphere of total revolution. In Wagner, the fundamental idea of all fascisms emerges, even if they differ in various aspects: the supremacy of aesthetics over ethics, and the replacement of justice with violence."

It was in a cultural environment polarized around these themes that Giuseppe Verdi took on the battle to "lower the tuning fork," to universalize the pitch according to which Bach, Beethoven, and Mozart had written their great works, to only cite the greatest. It was not a question of a polemic around a technical question, or not merely, but, as we know from his life, Verdi was always moved in his musical activity by a deep love for the classics, a great patriotic passion, and by the mission to "make the Italians," once Italy was made. The Verdian, Italian, universal *bel canto*, trained generations and generations of persons who, through the theater and opera, learned with joy, happiness, and the passion of their hearts to become better citizens. If we lose the great Verdi voices, in fact, we shall also lose great poetry and great prose.

If we do not defend *bel canto*, we shall also lose our beautiful Italian language. We must protect and develop this heritage, and kindle the hearts of our youth for the great causes which are the artistic content of the tragedies of Shakespeare, Schiller, and Verdi's operas, because today's world, teetering on the brink of a precipice, is the world described in those tragedies, but we are the ones who must avoid the tragic conclusion which otherwise lies ahead, by changing our actions. To live today means to become a hero in those great causes; and what more enthralling future could be offered to youth, to humanity, than that of living as true "heroes"? Italy has a great responsibility in the defense and development of music and *bel canto*, because Italy was created in many respects precisely upon these, and thanks to these. As Italian patriots, we say "Viva Verdi"; but I cannot but thank from the depth of my heart Mr. Lyndon LaRouche who inspired this research and this battle.