



The Music & Vision

classical music newsletter

TRAINING SINGERS – Issue 82, 1 January 2015

In speaking of the most popular grand operas, people usually mention great Verdi roles like Aida, Amneris, and Radames, and iconic Wagner characters like Brünnhilde, Siegfried, Wotan and the black-voiced villain, Hagen. Unfortunately, during the last decade, there has been a shortage of the type of voice demanded for these parts among emerging singers. To insure a more constant flow of dramatic voices, world-renowned mezzo-soprano Dolora Zajick has been training singers with the potential to sing these roles at her Institute for Young Dramatic Voices since 2006.

Maria Nockin: Can you tell if a voice is dramatic or has the potential to become dramatic from hearing the singer on the type of recording most prospective students send with their applications?

Dolora Zajick: Dramatic voices have to be large. For example, Siegfried has to be heard over a great deal of sound from the brass instruments in the orchestra. The easiest way to ascertain the size of a voice is to hear it in a big hall. In most cases, it's difficult to tell how large a voice is when listening to an MP3. Some voices may sound lyric on a recording but when heard in a sizeable hall they may put out more sound than singers who have a higher degree of dramatic color in their voices.

When we listen to the recordings we receive from applicants to our program, we look for musicality, musicianship, communicative abilities, interpretation of text, and diction. The older the singer, the more these things need to be in place, particularly musicianship and languages. We also look at the overall health and quality of the voice. After dealing with those issues, we select those whom we want to hear live. **Read more ...**

AMSTERDAM: LOHENGRIN LITE — CONCERT AND OPERA REVIEWS

'Stage director Pierre Audi is not one to be strictly representational in his story telling. At times in my past encounters, Mr Audi has summoned forth interpretive results of unearthly beauty and unerring emotional resonance. His successes are among my most memorable opera-going experiences. At other times, Pierre's over-thinking of subtext has muddled the plot and defused the emotional core of the musico-dramatic source material. His ambitious *Lohengrin* for the Netherlands Opera manages moments of haunting beauty, it is true, but random choices of distracting symbols and inexplicable stage movement draw the viewer out of the artistic illusion with alarming regularity.' — James Sohre reports on Pierre Audi's production of Wagner's *Lohengrin* for Netherlands Opera.

Roderic Dunnett was fascinated by Balázs Kovalik's new production of *Die Frau Ohne Schatten* for Opera Leipzig, and also looks both forwards and backwards to the 2015 and 2014 Three Choirs Festivals in the UK.

Malcolm Miller was at the 2014 BPSE Intercollegiate Piano Competition to hear first prize winner Mihai Ritivoiu and seven other contestants.

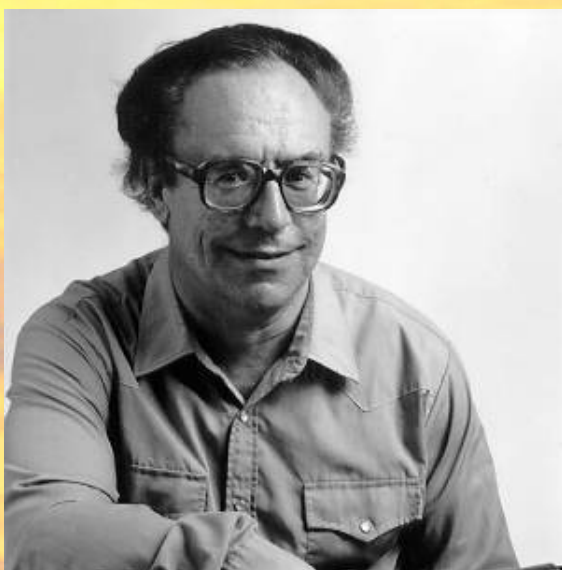
Giuseppe Pennisi reports from Venice on *La traviata* and *Simon Boccanegra*, from Naples on *Il Trovatore*, from Jesi on Offenbach's *The Tales of Hoffmann*, was at the opening night of La Scala's opera season for Beethoven's *Fidelio* and was impressed by Dvorak's *Rusalka* in Rome.

Maria Nockin was impressed by three operas streamed in HD from New York Metropolitan Opera: *Die Meistersinger von Nürnberg*, *Carmen* (which she thought was one of this era's best productions) and Rossini's *The Barber of Seville*.

Mike Wheeler listens to the Jubilee String Quartet's Haydn, Mozart and Janáček and to pianist Francesco Piemontesi, to a series of stage works at Opera North — Monteverdi's *Coronation of Poppaea*, Verdi's *La traviata* and Smetana's *The Bartered Bride*, and reviews a series of Christmas concerts given by the Sitwell Singers, Derby Choral Union, Derby Cathedral Choir and Derby Concert Orchestra.

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ASTOUNDING CONTRIBUTIONS — LARRY SITSKY AT EIGHTY

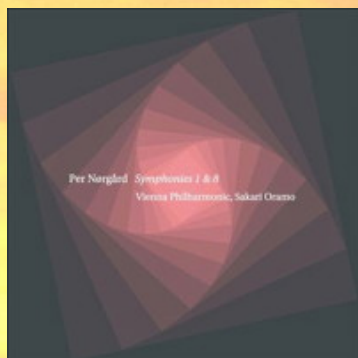


'In the year 2014 the great Australian composer, pianist, scholar and teacher Larry Sitsky celebrated his eightieth birthday. Fortunately, many concerts were presented to honour his birth, his achievements and his contributions to musical culture both in Australia and abroad.

'Born in China of Russian parents, Larry Sitsky emigrated to Australia when young, pursued music studies with Winifred Burston, later studied in America with Egon Petri (from whom he imbibed the tradition of pianist-composer Ferruccio Busoni) and returned to Australia, eventually teaching at the Canberra School of Music (as Head of Keyboard Studies, then Head of Musicology and Head of Composition). Sitsky has made astounding contributions to Australia in performance, composition, education and through countless articles, books and essays, all at the

highest professional level.' — Endre Anaru pays tribute. [Read more ...](#)

CD REVIEWS — NORTHERN AND SOUTHERN LANDSCAPES



'This premiere recording of the eighth symphony captures a live performance. The audience is silent, the SACD recording outstanding, and Sakari Oramo's direction superb. It's hard to imagine a more ideal presentation of the Vienna Philharmonic sound, or of Nørgård's bookend symphonies.' — Ron Bierman finds it hard to imagine a more ideal presentation.

'The main oboist in many of these pieces is Zenia Löffler, and her playing really was a revelation — her sound was even and her articulation nothing short of staggering. I was also impressed with her ornamentation: beautiful and never intrusive, one was always conscious of the melody. Her technique was masterful and dazzling in its virtuosity, but she never let it get in the way of the music, and I never found her playing flashy.' — Geoff Pearce discovers imaginative programming on this harmonia mundi disc of Venetian concerti, and also finds *Dedications* — Paris Conservatoire connections for flute and piano on MSR Classics — a good addition to any collection.

'Bach was an inveterate borrower from himself and others, so this reconstruction of the Prince Leopold funeral music has every justification. Forkel seems to have been in possession of the original as late as 1818, since when it has disappeared. Bach had great admiration for his previous employer at Cöthen, who died far too young in his early thirties. Bach had remained in touch with Cöthen, where his second wife Anna Magdalena had also been employed. He sent verses to celebrate the arrival of the heir apparent (he died in infancy), and took his choir there to perform a cantata in honour of the mother two months later.' — Robert Anderson listens to incomparable music from Pygmalion on harmonia mundi, and also listens to Richard Blackford's *The Great Animal Orchestra* on Nimbus Alliance.

'On the present evidence, the American James Gaffigan, winner of the 2004 Solti Conducting Competition, is a first-class technician — the Lucerne Symphony responds to him with warm, well-balanced sounds and excellent ensemble — who knows how to animate a singing phrase. And his choice of Dvořák's Sixth Symphony, rather than a chestnut like the G major or the *New World*, is refreshing, suggesting an intrepid programming sense.' — Stephen Francis Vasta is looking forward to hearing more of Gaffigan's work.

Keith Bramich is impressed by Christmas music on Delphian CDs from Oxford and Cambridge in the UK and from Birmingham, Alabama, USA on MSR Classics.

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NEWS AND EVENTS - MEET JOHN DOE

Excerpts from Daniel Catán's unfinished opera *Meet John Doe* are to be performed in a workshop in January 2015.

We mark the passing of Claude Frank, Jerzy Semkow, Ray Steadman-Allen, Irene Dalis, Janis Martin, John Persen, Hans Wallat, Lydia Mordkovitch, José Feghali, Knut Nystedt, Manuel De Sica, Luis Herrera de la Fuente, Aleksey Nasedkin and Mario Abramovich.

[News in detail ...](#)

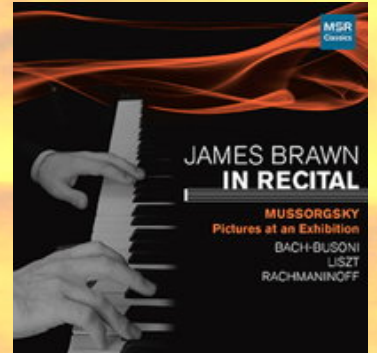
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TRUE COMMAND — SPONSORED FEATURE

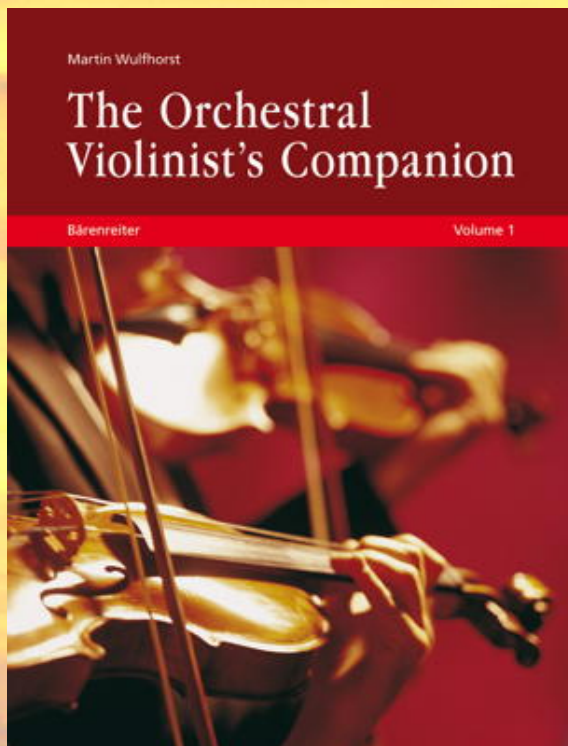
Andrew Schartmann's review of the MSR Classics CD *James Brawn in Recital*, featuring Mussorgsky's *Pictures at an Exhibition* and music by Bach-Busoni, Liszt and Rachmaninoff, has recently been sponsored, and is now featured on our homepage :

CD Spotlight. True Command - James Brawn plays Bach, Liszt, Musorgsky and Rachmaninov - recommended by Andrew Schartmann. 'The "Promenade" ... is like butter in Brawn's hands.' [Read more ...](#)



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BOOK REVIEW — THE ORCHESTRAL VIOLINIST'S COMPANION



'What Martin Wulfhorst has done is both hugely valuable and minutely researched. He's dissected everything any violinist (or even string player?) could hope to know about — or be faced with, within an orchestral context, at least for the foreseeable future.

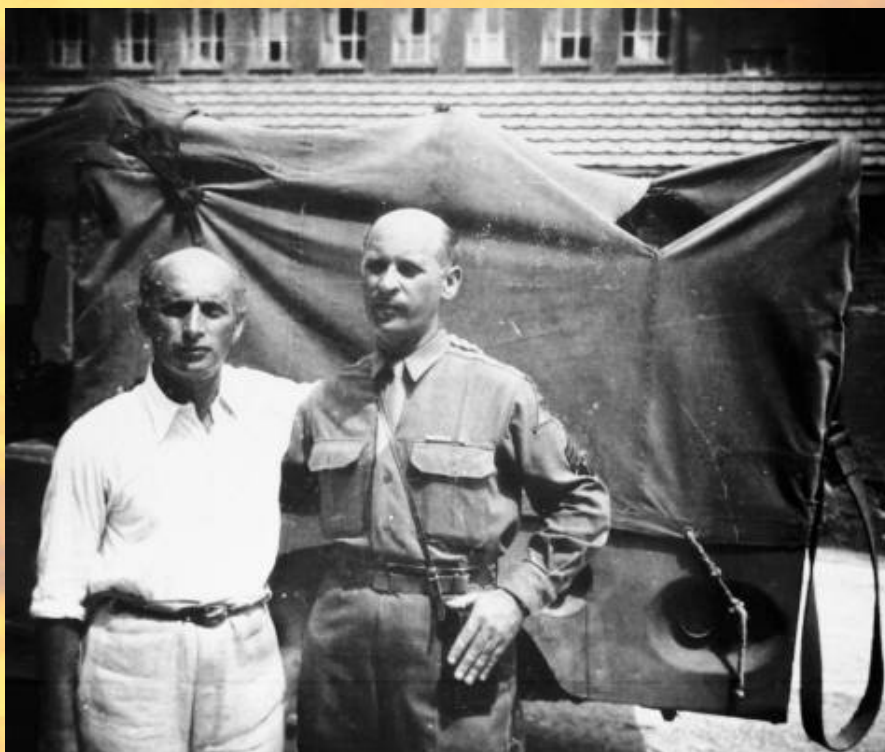
'This book is, in short, the absolutely definitive, utterly magisterial guide to orchestral violin playing. It's almost frighteningly comprehensive — for nothing, that I have spotted at least, has escaped Wulfhorst's eagle-eye — whether it's the optimum part of the bow for particular passagework, or practice techniques, sight-reading exercises, mental rehearsal or methods of dealing with MPA (Musical Performance Anxiety).

'And that's without even mentioning — although I still will, having no word limit — such technical gems as methods of practicing shifts to (much) higher pitches, fantastic tips on blending within a string section, thoughtful notes on ideal bow division and a thorough discussion of styles of vibrato: it's all here — and with

examples on almost every page (the cost must have been prodigious, but then, so are the results). Bow techniques and varieties of articulation are also included, as are string tuning within the scale framework, rhythmic issues, notation and performance practice (this last including excellent advice on where to look farther, if seriously interested, for example, in baroque work) along with the —

always vexed — issue of bowings. In short Wulfhorst's book, alone and in itself, would be enough to guide some mythical pupil, mysteriously unexposed otherwise to orchestra playing, to almost as strong an understanding as might be provided by several years within an orchestra, were s/he to study it with sufficient assiduousness.' — Alice McVeigh is impressed. [Read more ...](#)

REMEMBERING HOFFY — ALICE McVEIGH RECALLS HER CELLO TEACHER



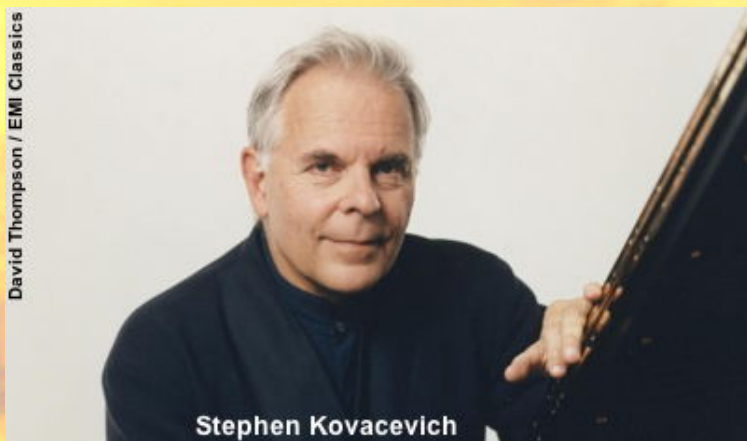
'6 December was Hoffy's birthday. Had he lived, he would now be nearly a-hundred-and-ten. He was already in his sixties in the early 1970s, when I, his new cello pupil, a hugely nervous twelve-year-old, showed up, having been learning the cello for a grand total of about three months.

'Reuben Hofmekler (1905-1994), originally from Vilna, Lithuania, already looked older than he really was. (In America, he took the first name Robert, though everybody called him Hoffy.) Almost entirely bald, despite having once sported those blonde locks which had deceived Hitler's ghoulish minions into wrongly believing him not to be Jewish, he boasted a

prominent nose, a prominent paunch, irresistibly laughing eyes, a wonderful hand-span for the cello and a vaguely professorial look. His alert mind (and inner fury) had taken him straight from escaping the Nazis — all but one of all the rest of his family died in the concentration camps — into US Army intelligence, where he was, of course, signed to secrecy.

'After the dust had settled he married an American and settled in northern Virginia, to become The Cello Teacher (excluding those players in the National Symphony Orchestra who taught on the side). His remaining brother Michael was more of a performer.' [Read more ...](#)

SIGNIFICANT ANNIVERSARIES IN 2015



Stephen Kovacevich turns 75 in 2015. **Tasmin Little, Lilya Zilberstein, Igor Krivokapic, Bryn Terfel, Markus Stenz** and **Murray McLachlan** all celebrate their 50th birthdays in 2015.

Born 400 years ago: **Christopher Gibbons**

Born 325 years ago: **Henry Carey** and **Gottfried Heinrich Stölzel**

Born 175 years ago: **Pyotr Ilyich Tchaikovsky**

Born 150 years ago: **Emile Jacques-Dalcroze**, **Paul Dukas**, **Alexander Glazunov**, **Carl Nielsen** and **William Wolstenholme**

Born 125 years ago: **Myra Hess**, **Frank Martin**, **Bohuslav Martinu**, **Hans Gál**, **Jacques Ibert**, **Benno Moiseiwitsch** and **Beniamino Gigli**

Born 100 years ago: **Ruth Railton**, **Elisabeth Schwarzkopf**, **Alexander Brott**, **Earl Wild**, **Grigori Frid**, **Knut Nystedt**, **George Perle**, **Patrick Piggott**, **Humphrey Searle** and **Jean Sibelius**

Born 75 years ago: **Anthony Rolfe Johnson** and **Frank Zappa**

Died 10 years ago: **Moura Lympany**, **Carla Wood**, **Carlo Maria Giulini**, **Gwydion Brooke**, **Lazar Berman**, **Christopher Bunting**, **Sergiu Comissiona**, **David Diamond**, **Robert Farnon**, **George Rochberg** and **Sixten Ehrling**

Died 25 years ago: **Eva Turner**, **Ernst Bacon**, **Leonard Bernstein**, **Aaron Copland**, **Reginald Goodall**, **Patrick Piggott** and **John Russell**

Died 50 years ago: **Myra Hess**, **Erik Chisholm**, **Hans Knappertsbusch**, **Albert Schweitzer** and **Edgard Varèse**

Died 75 years ago: **Donald Francis Tovey**

Died 100 years ago: **Theodor Leschetizky** and **Sergei Taneyev**

Died 150 years ago: **William Vincent Wallace**

Died 200 years ago: **Johann Peter Salomon**



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