

alla musica e allo spettacolo.” (17) With such a rich and engaging collection of essays, this book has made an auspicious beginning to the series.

David Lawton

«*Poetischer Ausdruck der Seele*»: *Die Kunst, Verdi zu singen*, hrsg. von Isolde SCHMID-REITER (Schriften der Europäischen Musiktheater-Akademie, 10), Regensburg: ConBrio 2016, 248 S.

Isolde SCHMID-REITER, *Vorwort* (7) – Sieghart DÖHRING, *Krise und Neuorientierung. Zur Situation des Operngesangs in der ersten Hälfte des 19. Jahrhunderts* (11) – Emanuele SENICI, *Vocal categories and individual singers in early Verdi* (23) – Daniel BRANDENBURG, *Varesi, Penco und die anderen: Verdi-Sänger des 19. Jahrhunderts* (39) – Thomas SEEDORF, *Meta Seinemeyer und die deutsche Verdi-Renaissance* (53) – Jürgen KESTING, *Verdi-Gesangs-Traditionen* (65) – Andrew MORAVCSIK, *Where have the great big Verdi voices gone?* (83) – Leo NUCCI [im Gespräch mit Dominique MEYER], *Die Herausforderung, Verdi zu singen* (129) – Claudio TOSCANI, *Verdi und die Sänger: Von der Ästhetik zur Interpretation* (135) – Peter BERNE, *Verzierungspraxis bei Verdi. Die Cotogni-Ricci-Tradition* (153) – Antonio PAPPANO [in conversation with John DEATHRIDGE], *Singing Verdi: between fidelity and freedom* (189) – Dominique MEYER, *Verdi besetzen* (209) – Christa LUDWIG und Ramón VARGAS [im Gespräch mit Stephan MÖSCH], *Accento verdiano* (223)

The present volume grew out of a conference held at the Vienna Staatsoper on 25 and 26 June 2012. The words in quotation marks in the title are from an interview with Verdi when he conducted his *Messa da Requiem* in Vienna, 1875:

An Stimmen fehlt es gewiß nicht in Deutschland, sie sind beinahe klangvoller als die italienischen, die Sänger aber betrachten den Gesang als Gymnastik, befassen sich wenig mit der Ausbildung der Stimme und trachten nur, in der kürzesten Zeit ein großes Repertoire zu erhalten. Sie geben sich keine Mühe, eine schöne Schattirung in den Gesang zu bringen, ihr ganzes Bestreben ist dahin gerichtet, diese oder jene Note mit großer Kraft hervorzustoßen. Daher ist ihr Gesang kein poetischer Ausdruck der Seele, sondern ein physischer Kampf ihres Körpers.¹

¹ Anonymous, *Verdi in Wien*, in: *Neue Freie Presse*, 9 June 1875, 1; reprinted in: *Signale für die musikalische Welt* 33 (1875), 465–467; here 466; English translation: Marcello CONATI, *Encounters with Verdi* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1984), 109–110; Ital-

A distinguished group of scholars and performers took part in the conference, and their contributions address the art of singing Verdi from an historical point of view, as well that of present day performance issues. The essays by Sieghart Döhring, Emanuele Senici, Daniel Brandenburg, and Claudio Toscani focus on developments in vocal technique and style during Verdi's lifetime. Döhring addresses the impact of Gilbert-Louis Duprez's singing his famous *ut de poitrine* in a performance of Rossini's *Guillaume Tell* at the Paris Opéra in 1837, leading to the creation of the heroic tenor Fach in Paris, in contrast to the lighter, more flexible and highly nuanced style of Duprez's contemporary Adolphe Nourrit. A similar duality in vocal approach extended eventually to soprano voices as well, both in France and in Italy. Senici's essay examines the vocal categories operative in Italy at the beginning of Verdi's career, with particular focus on the *primo baritono* and the *seconda donna* (whether soprano or mezzo soprano/contralto), and contrasts the three different versions of Foresto's romanza in *Attila*, Act III, which Verdi wrote for three different singers. Daniel Brandenburg explores what the criteria for a "*voce verdiana*" were during Verdi's lifetime by reflecting on the careers of several singers whom the composer particularly admired, including Rosina Penco, Felice Varesi, and Enrico Delle Sedie. Claudio Toscani traces the development of Verdi's ideas about musical and scenic performance over the course of his career, through consideration of his letters, contemporary treatises on singing (particularly Enrico Delle Sedie's *Arte e filologia del canto*, 1876), and historical recordings made at the beginning of the 20th century. Related to these concerns are the essays of Jürgen Kesting and Peter Berne, both concerned with performance practice in 19th-century Italy.² Kesting's essay analyzes several historical recordings, and what they tell us about performance practice, while Berne lays out the principles of vocal ornamentation from the Bel Canto period, advocating their relevance for early Verdi, and

ian translation: *Interviste e incontri con Verdi*, ed. Marcello CONATI, [Milano], il Formichiere, 1980, 103–107; enlarged reissue: Marcello CONATI, *Verdi. Interviste e incontri*, (Torino: EDT, 2000), 107–112. Thomas Seedorf uses this same quotation at the beginning of his essay on soprano Meta Seinemeyer's role in the German Verdi Renaissance of the 1920s—a singer who, he concludes, does not exemplify Verdi's negative view of German singers.

² Music critic Kesting is author of *Die großen Sänger* (Düsseldorf: Claassen, 1986). Berne is a conductor/pedagogue who studied with Luigi Ricci, and is author of *Belcanto. Historische Aufführungspraxis in der italienischen Oper von Rossini bis Verdi. Ein praktisches Lehrbuch für Sänger, Dirigenten und Korrepetitoren* (Worms: Werner, 2008).

stressing the importance of material from the baritone Antonio Cotogni, as handed down through the publications of Luigi Ricci.

Among the contributions devoted to singing Verdi today, two did not originate from the conference: John Deathridge's wide-ranging conversation with Sir Antonio Pappano, which took place in the Royal Opera House at Covent Garden in 2015, and Andrew Moravcsik's explanations for the shortage of excellent *spinto* and dramatic voices since the 1980s.³ Dominique Meyer, Intendant of the Wiener Staatsoper considers the difficulty of casting within the constraints of the international star-system, which requires contracts to be signed many years in advance of an engagement. Finally, the remaining items in the volume are lively interviews with baritone Leo Nucci (by Dominique Meyer) and mezzosoprano Christa Ludwig and tenor Ramón Vargas (by Stephan Mösch).

The book offers an excellent introduction to the topic, and it is particularly gratifying that it originated at one of the world's most prestigious opera companies. Although the historical material will be quite familiar to scholars, it will likely be a revelation for conductors and singers who have not encountered these ideas before. In addition, since the authors avoid technical jargon in their essays, the book is also accessible to general readers and operagoers. At the conference, many of the oral presentations included recorded excerpts; these are listed in the footnotes for each chapter, and are readily available on *youtube*.

David Lawton

Verdi, Wagner, Strauss: tre drammaturgie musicali (Atti delle giornate di studio «Chi mi toglie il regio scettro? Verdi e Wagner, opera e dramma, regie e registi per cinquant'anni», Bologna, R. Accademia Filarmonica, 5 ottobre 2013 [e] «Riccardo Strauss in Italia e in italiano», Bologna, R. Accademia Filarmonica, 8 novembre 2014, a cura di Piero MIOLI, Bologna, Pàtron, 2016, 256 pp.

Loris AZZARONI, *Presentazione* (7) – Piero MIOLI, *Introduzione: Concordia discordie* (9) – Piero MIOLI, *Qual risorta fenice novella. Opera, Italia, Unità* (23) – Giancarlo LANDINI, *La Scala con Verdi e Wagner: reale e imparziale?* (37) – Giorgio APPOLONIA, *«Sempre libera degg'io». Registi e primedonne tra Verdi e Wagner* (49) – Stephen HASTINGS, *La*

³ On the basis of extensive interviews with opera professionals, Moravcsik concludes that there are three main reasons for this shortage: the difficulty of identifying young vocal talent because of the predominance of singing with microphones; the problem of late vocal maturity for such voices; and the overemphasis on visual appearance in casting decisions.