

8-21-2023

Frances Wendorf Lecture Transcript

Frances Wendorf

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Recommended Citation

Wendorf, Frances and Perez, Victoria, "Frances Wendorf Lecture Transcript" (2023). *2023: Frances Wendorf Lecture, "The Musician vs. The Critic: Henri Temianka and the Los Angeles Times"*. 2.
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INTRODUCTION

Reference image: [[Henri Temianka playing the violin](#)].

Hello! My name is Frances Wendorf and I am the annual Temianka Archival Scholar for the Frank Mt. Pleasant Library of Special Collections and Archives at Leatherby Libraries at Chapman University. The program is generously funded by Dr. Daniel Temianka, in honor of his father, Henri Temianka. All of the research conducted and the photos, letters, and newspaper clips you see in this presentation I gleaned from these valuable treasure troves of archival materials that illuminate the rich specificities of Henri Temianka's acclaimed career and vibrant, melodious life.

Reference image: [[Henri Temianka \(Concert Programs\), California Chamber Symphony Society](#)].

Reference image: [[Henri Temianka plays the violin](#)].

Reference image: [[Henri Temianka photographs, professional acquaintances](#)].

Reference image: [[Henri Temianka \(Concert Programs\), Paganini Quartet](#)].

Henri Temianka was a renowned musician, conductor, and author whose influences linger and whose contributions to the world of classical music are still widely praised today. Born in 1906, from Poland, Temianka rose to fame in the mid-twentieth century, emerging as a leading figure in the classical music scene. His early life was shaped by his family's love of music. He began playing the violin at a young age, quickly demonstrating a natural talent for the instrument. At just sixteen, he was accepted to study at the Paris Conservatory, one of the world's most prestigious music schools. There, he honed his skills under the tutelage of renowned musicians, including violinist Georges Enesco.

In the years that followed, Temianka went on to establish himself as a soloist and

chamber musician, performing across Europe and North America. He also founded several music ensembles, including the Paganini Quartet and the California Chamber Symphony. Throughout his career, Temianka was a passionate advocate for contemporary classical music, and he premiered works by some of the most celebrated composers of his time.

Reference image: [[Henri Temianka holding a violin](#)].

Temianka's contributions to the classical music world were not limited to his performances. He was also a prolific author, penning several books on music, including his memoir, *Facing the Music*. In this work, Temianka offers a glimpse into his life as a musician, detailing the challenges he faced on his journey to success, as well as offering sage wisdom gleaned from his experiences in the classical music field.

Temianka was also known for being outspoken with his definitive opinions that originated from his passion for not only contemporary classical music, but also his fellow musicians. His deep reverence for classical music and for the arts extended to often fraught conversations with the writings of a handful of critics. Temianka's book, in fact, references these squabbles specifically, in a chapter called "The Music Critic, Or Murder in the Concert Hall." Humorously starting off the chapter with a disclaimer of his own bias, Temianka writes: "don't believe everything I say in this chapter. Performers and critics are, after all, natural enemies. You see, I'm already exaggerating."¹ He thoughtfully continues that "a real music critic ought to have the conscience and ability to study a new score before criticizing it. He ought to have studied an old score before boldly pitting his opinion about its interpretation against that of the performer who has spent years of devoted research on it."²

¹ Henri Temianka, *Facing the Music: An Inside View of the Real Concert World* (Sherman Oaks, CA: Alfred Publishing Co., 1980), 187.

² Temianka, *Facing the Music*, 202.

Temianka utilized these sentiments in response to what he called, in a letter to the editor of the *Los Angeles Times* (*LA Times*) in 1970, the pattern of “destructive tones” of reviews that had “become the established and expected norm of the *LA Times* music critics.” Temianka objected to the vitriolic nature of the reviews that often demeaned artists, insisting that “now, more than ever, the arts need and deserve support.” He believed these unnecessarily malicious criticisms of artists came from an abuse of power that privileged elitist interests while unnecessarily degrading the more vulnerable aspects of a performance and performer. He once said on the subject: “if the critics already knew what I was telling the audience, it bored them. If they didn’t, it infuriated them. I couldn’t win. And they let me know it.”³

This lecture contextualizes Temianka within the world of classical music, particularly in Los Angeles, in the second half of the 20th century and explores these capricious, and admittedly sometimes entertaining, dynamics between the musician and the writers of the *LA Times*, and the intersections between them.

Reference image: [[Henri Temianka \(Concert Programs\), Musical Courier](#)].

Temianka’s name first appeared in the *Los Angeles Times* in 1944, when he made his Los Angeles debut as a violinist at the Wilshire Ebell Theatre. The author, named only by the initials C. S. H. wrote:

The often-advanced theory that a teacher is seldom a good performer, and vice-versa, was beautifully upset last night at the Wilshire Ebell Theater by Violinist Henri Temianka, who opened the fall concert season with his Los Angeles debut. [...]

This Scotch-born violinist of curiously Slavic appearance is an interpreter of exceptional merit. Though not overtly expressive, he is an inherently romantic interpreter, possessing great scholarship and an Impressive technique which is always used as a means rather than as his reason for playing. [...]

He proved this with his terrific performance of the Bach Partita in B minor-playing which has only been equaled in this reviewer’s memory by Szigeti and Milstein. This was true greatness; it had exceptional clarity, never broke down from overforcing, and yet managed to build a tremendously impressive façade of tonal architecture.

³ Temianka, *Facing the Music*, 150.

Note the interesting mention of Temianka's primary employment as a teacher, a position of Temianka's that apparently pre-dated the initial acclaims of his career as a musician and conductor. We will revisit Temianka's legacy of education later on in this presentation, but as we will see, Temianka's devotion to education and tenacious support of his fellow musician's endeavors and growth intersects, not without some friction, with his relationship with the *Los Angeles Times*.

Reference image: [["Let's Talk Music" concert program](#)].

Reference image: [[Publicity photograph for "Let's Talk Music"](#)].

Reference image: [[Henri Temianka \(Concert Programs\), California Chamber Symphony](#)].

While this first mention of Temianka in the newspaper proved innocuous, the drama surrounding the correspondence between Temianka and the *Los Angeles Times* often centered around Temianka's performance lectures, officially titled the "Let's Talk Music" series. The predecessor for my Archival Scholar position, Mitchell Tanaka, created a virtual exhibition last year on Henri Temianka's famous, and among music critics, sometimes "infamous," performance lectures. He writes: "Temianka's onstage lectures formed the answer: an experience where concertgoers could be told and shown precisely how a piece of music was performed. Temianka's conversational and story-focused delivery provided extra context and allowed audience members to infer aspects of music history and theory that they may not have known. In attempting to connect with concertgoers through these means, Temianka found a way to close the gap between audience and performer. To achieve a more democratic approach to music education, this level of intimacy and connection was deemed necessary."⁴

The lectures were a key target of the critics due to their unconventional nature; some

⁴ Mitchell Tanaka, "Temianka Talks Music: Lectures from a Virtuoso," 2022, Leatherby Libraries Virtual Exhibit, Chapman University, <https://scalar.chapman.edu/scalar/temianka/index?path=index>.

might say, however, that this was in part due to the lectures specifically attempting to remedy the conventional aloof elitism performed by musicians, and apparently by similarly elitist critics, at the concert hall. In his book, *Facing the Music*, Temianka writes: “one holds that there is a certain mystique about the artist that should be carefully nurtured and preserved. The artist who follows this precept makes every effort to remain aloof from ‘the people,’” but Temianka writes, “I am of the other school.”⁵

Temianka’s position as a pupil of this “other school” perhaps made him an easy target for critics accustomed to the school of the “mystique.”

The real drama began, however, with the newspaper’s hiring of Albert Goldberg. In hindsight, Albert Goldberg’s relationship to Temianka and these lectures also began innocuously with amiable article reviews popping up in the late 1950s and early 1960s. Goldberg wrote in 1962 fondly of the “Temianka Chamber Symphony Series,” noting that “Temianka does not tell everything that might be told about every piece, but he blends facts and apocrypha in an entertaining manner and with discreet brevity.”

Goldberg also notes that Temianka did not “make the mistake of talking down to a large audience that seemed to be recruited from an entirely new concert goer.” He goes on to say that while talking alone would not suffice for a successful concert, the quality of the music proved proportionate to the pleasing quality of the lectures. In another review, Goldberg commended Temianka’s use of verbal connection with the audience, highlighting one particularly endearing moment. He wrote of the occasion in 1961:

For a conductor Henri Temianka is a very honest man. Conductors, you know, can get by with murder –and frequently do. A baton cannot play wrong notes, for one thing, and it is the easiest matter in the world for a conductor to make it appear that an orchestra is responsible for his errors.

But when, in the course of the ‘Let’s Talk Music’ concert in UCLA’s Royce Hall

⁵ Temianka, *Facing the Music*, 150.

Sunday night, the last movement of Frank Martin's 'Petite Symphonie Concertante' ended in a disastrous free-for-all, Temianka did not scowl and glare reproachfully at the players of the California Chamber Symphony.

Instead, he manfully turned to the audience and said 'I made a mistake. We will play it again.'

Reference letter: [[Henri Temianka Correspondence; \(agoldberg\), Albert Goldberg](#)].

For some reason, however, Goldberg's opinion towards Temianka turned sour over the years, and he took to the papers. In December 1963, Goldberg provided unabashedly snarky comments about now "well established pattern" of "'Let's Talk Music.'" Even as he showed restraint against badmouthing the lectures to the public, he set himself above Temianka's audience. In 1961 he said, "when you put a title like that ['Let's Talk Music'] on a series of concerts, it takes them out of the purely musical category, and I don't think critics should be expected to sit through talking or lecturing by anyone at a concert." This tenuous relationship continued on with Goldberg's retirement until 1965. Goldberg was subsequently replaced by Martin Bernheimer, who served as the newspaper's full-time critic from 1965 to 1996.

Reference letter: [[Henri Temianka Correspondence; \(bernheimer\), Henri Temianka](#)].

Similarly, Temianka's relationship with Martin Bernheimer, which began upon his hiring in late 1965, began warmly and cordially - with a note from the former expressing to the latter that "your arrival in this community has aroused great interest. We all look forward to the important and constructive role which you are going to have in this rapidly expanding metropolis. I hope you will find much happiness and fulfillment here," In November 1965, Bernheimer actually penned an article called "Happy Talk Helps Concert," in which he outlined the special occasion where Temianka's "verbal annotations" were supplemented by the vocal talents of Vincent Price and Marni Nixon. He then goes on to nit-pick the performance, ending with a particularly scathing note saying that "the blame must rest with the conductor, not the

instrumentalists.”

Temianka proves with his introductory letter to Bernheimer, however, that his later vehement disagreements with and objections to the *LA Times* critics, and particularly Bernheimer, did not originate from an unjustified pre-bias for music criticism in general; nor, if he did have such a bias, did he ever express it in such a way that would warrant the vitriol he received.

Indeed, it was clear that a one-sided animosity had developed on the part of Bernheimer. In January 1967, Bernheimer wrote in a published review: “Henri Temianka and the California Chamber Symphony devoted Sunday night’s ‘Let’s Talk Music’ program to Hayden [sic], Busoni, Bach, and Mendelssohn. The talk, for the most part, was superficial; the music, for the most part, was marvelous; the performances, for the most part, were innocuous. It added up to a rather frustrating evening at Royce Hall. If the truth must be known, this writer has no enduring affection for verbal concert annotation. For those too lazy to read background material in the program, however, podium sermons at least have the potential advantage of providing some kind of instant enlightenment.”

Reference letter: [[Henri Temianka Correspondence; \(bernheimer\), Henri Temianka](#)].

In response, Temianka humorously wrote: “your review of the Oistrakh concert in today’s paper, knowledgeable in so many ways, is to me a classic illustration of what makes a critic’s assignment so difficult. It is all a matter of emphasis. For, while I recognize the accuracy of many of your critical remarks, you came away ‘frustrated’ and I came away walking on air.” Bernheimer’s bizarre objection to Temianka’s popular and well-received lectures continued throughout the next decades.

Reference image: [[Henri Temianka conducting at the Music Weekend](#)].

Reference image: [[Henri Temianka at Music Weekend](#)].

Temianka commented decades later at his 84th birthday party that the reason for the lectures was not simply to inform, it was to communicate, to entertain. He said that “I love playing, I love conducting. I love to entertain. I love to communicate with audiences. I’ve got a reservoir of joie de vivre that’s always there.” Perhaps the reason the critics so resisted this was its unconventional nature, but Temianka was never afraid to break the rules. On tradition and teaching in his interview with Goldberg in 1950, Temianka uttered this sentiment: “great though my own indebtedness is to the masters of the past, I have always felt that there is another side to tradition. Tradition is slippery as an eel, elusive as quicksilver.” Though this statement pre-dated Temianka’s impending career in conducting, one might say it foreshadows the creative, innovative attitude that Temianka brought with his lectures that breathed new life into older pieces. Temianka’s lectures actually began when he launched a series called “Concerts for Youth,”⁶ which offered performances by a small orchestra and featured explanatory lectures by Temianka. Of his lectures, Temianka himself once commented: “my crime in the eyes of critics is that I later carried on the idea to adult concerts as well. The audiences enjoy them, the critics don’t.”

Translating these lectures from children’s spaces to adult spaces allowed a preservation of the joyful, playful interactions we all have with music as children, before we become self-conscious of inhibitions. The lectures held space for wonder, curiosity, and entertainment. For fun, for interaction. As Bernheimer noted in his review, “sure, we could read a pamphlet, but what a magical thing to hear from the conductor, Temianka, himself, in real time, the magic of the piece.”

⁶ Henri Temianka also led a radio series in the 1950s and 1960s with the Los Angeles Philharmonic Orchestra called “Symphonies for Youth.”

Reference image: [[Henri Temianka Photographs, Professional Acquaintances, Doug Wilson](#)].

Reference image: [[Henri Temianka Photographs, Professional Acquaintances, Doug Wilson](#)].

Temianka also did not shy away from meeting with these adversaries. Here we have photos of Temianka and his dueling mates at various professional conferences and events. While of course the exact subject matter of these pictures' conversations are unknown, we can imply from the studied correspondences between these figures that they no doubt were full of fiery opinions and fearless sparring of wits.

Reference image: [[Henri Temianka](#)].

Revealing of Temianka's character and enduring integrity is the fact that the conductor went out of his way to defend not only his own musicians, but also any musicians that he felt were victim to unnecessary vitriol on the part of music criticism. Epistolary evidence shows that Temianka valued authenticity and vivacity over technical perfection, a sentiment echoed in his book.

Furthermore, he emphasized the bravery required of musicians in their performances, writing:

Too few critics realize how much the performer, walking out on the stage to face his audience, gives of himself night after night. Or how inhuman it is to expect the same degree of perfection at all times. What sustains the artist, even the most famous and self-assured, under such pressure and tension is the encouragement he receives from the outside world: his audience, his colleague, his friends, and the press. [...] It is this need for moral support that makes the artist sometimes hypersensitive to criticism.

I occasionally defend the critic's right to free speech. But I cannot defend his right to be vicious or witty at the artist's expense. (Temianka, *Facing the Music*, 197-198)

Reference letter: [[Henri Temianka Correspondence: \(bernheimer\), Henri Temianka](#)].

In 1967, Temianka wrote to Bernheimer:

As the main music critic in L.A., holding a position of the greatest importance in the musical life of a great city, you have made yourself a predominantly negative and destructive factor. I am talking of your reviews only, mind you. Your general articles on

musical policies are frequently excellent, but the moment you write a review, you assume the attitude of a mean teacher handing out good and bad marks. That is not what reviewing is about. Let the great Rubinstein give a glorious concert, but play a few wrong notes in the course of the evening, and it apparently would kill you to refrain from harping on ‘his clinkers’. What for ? [sic] to show what marvelous ears you have ? [sic] or that even the greatest musicians are human ? [sic] By all means write about mistakes if they pervade a performance and affect the total impression, or if mentioning them serves a musical purpose. In all other cases (of which there have been too many in your reviews), it is just lack of respect for the artist, lack of human feeling, needless cruelty and – pardon me – ridiculous vanity. [...]

You will say that your musical standards happen to be so high that you cannot compromise them and be bothered with little things like human considerations. But music in all its phases is immensely human, and without human sympathy you can never do it justice.

Reference image: [[Henri Temianka \(Concert Programs\), Columbia Artists Festivals](#)].

In 1971, Temianka wrote, in response to a review from Bernheimer of the Los Angeles Philharmonic upon its return from a tour in Europe, a letter that also interestingly proves that Temianka was not the only person complaining of the music critic’s attitude. He writes:

Congratulations to Fleischmann for his excellent letter denouncing Martin Bernheimer’s shocking attempt to denigrate the Los Angeles Philharmonic upon its return from a triumphant European tour.

What motivated Bernheimer? Why did he go out of his way to search for unfavorable comments in the European press, pull them out of context, and present them in such a way as to distort the facts? Clearly, he had no other purpose than to create harm and mischief, demean the orchestra, demoralize its members, and draw once again attention to himself.

The same destructive attitude pervades Bernheimer’s sweeping dismissal of 17 years of service to this community by the California Chamber Symphony with the scornful epithet ‘artistic mediocrity’ (Calendar, Dec. 26); 17 years of loyal support by enthusiastic audiences who have defied a ceaseless barrage of what Bernheimer himself terms ‘negative criticism.’

Reference letter: [[Henri Temianka Correspondence; \(bernheimer\), Henri Temianka](#)].

Reference image: [[Henri Temianka \(Concert Programs\), California Chamber Symphony](#)].

In 1972, Temianka writes to Martin Bernheimer:

There is no justifiable reason why a musician who dedicates his life to the pursuit of his art should be robbed of his personal dignity. Nor should we be expected to put up with such ignorance as revealed in the same review by the statement: ‘One missed the kind of

formal ornamentation', etc. If the reviewer would only look at the score (I am assuming he can read a score) and listen to the recording of the Bach E major Concerto by some of the world's most celebrated violinists, he might discover that there is unanimous agreement that ornamentation by the orchestra is uncalled for in this work. I shall gladly demonstrate this at the next California Chamber Symphony Concert at Royce Hall on Sunday, December 10.

Yours Cordially,
Henri Temianka.

Reference letter: [[Henri Temianka Correspondence; \(bernheimer\), Henri Temianka](#)].

Reference image: [[Henri Temianka Photographs, Professional Acquaintances, David Levy](#)].

Temianka also writes to Martin Bernheimer in 1972 that "I have been slow to respond to your letter of November 15 which you begin by saying, 'I am appalled ...', because I too am appalled. Perfect we are not, but neither are we 'unconcerned or ill-formed'."

Reference image: [[Henri Temianka portrait](#)].

In 1984, Bernheimer responded to a submitted article by Temianka titled "Why Should Music Critics Have Immunity?" in what he deemed an episode of "Temianka Strikes Back," saying that he "regretfully" had to return the article he wished to publish. Shortly after, Temianka wrote a response to this dismissal: "it may well be that the article betrays anger. After all, during the six years that I have devoted my major energies and efforts to provide Los Angeles with a Chamber Symphony that was previously non-existent, the critics on the most influential local newspaper have devoted their efforts to undermining and ridiculing this achievement. One of your first acts, when you arrived upon the scene, was to give long overdue recognition of the significance of a Chamber Symphony per se. The shock was all the greater when Arland's destructive article appeared last March."

Reference letter: [[Henri Temianka Correspondence; \(cariaga\), Henri Temianka](#)].

Frankly, one would be remiss in thinking that Temianka overreacted after reading some of the reviews he criticized - in which he noted not only unnecessary bitter, but sometimes

egregious errors. For example, in December of 1984, Goldberg⁷ wrote a review beginning sardonically with: “Henri Temianka is nominally holding forth these days with a complement of players he calls the California Chamber Virtuosi, a group so small there’s ostensibly no need for him to conduct.”

However, humorously, Temianka notes in his response to the *LA Times*:

Although it would be unrealistic to expect any redress from the treatment to which my concerts are routinely subjected by the *Los Angeles Times*, I would be remiss were I not to place on the record some of the more flagrant professional lapses.

At the opening Pepperdine concert last September 22, I announced from the stage that I would not conduct the first number, which was a Vivaldi Concerto for Two Violins. I promptly walked off the stage, leaving matters in the hands of my two wonderful violinists, Nina Bodnar and Kathleen Lenski.

In his review two days later, Albert Goldberg⁸ announced that I had conducted the piece thereby creating serious doubts as to whether he was present at the concert, or if he was, in what condition.

Next he dug up from his grave the unfortunate Owen Brady, who was murdered some years ago, and announced that he had been the harpsichordist at the concert. Had it been true, it would have been a scene equaling anything in *Amadeus*. Fortunately Owen Burdick was on hand to fill the vacuum left by Mr. Brady, and fill it he did superbly.

Temianka later noted:

It seems to me that if anyone tried to practice this brand of journalism in the New York Times, he or she would not last another day. Speaking for myself, I have become inured to these blows. It has reached the point where I have to be grateful when my concerts are not reviewed in the *Times*. I do wish that the *Times* would draw the line somewhere and not omit us time and again from the Calendar listings, as has happened with regard to our concerts at the Taper, Pepperdine, and in the past, at the Getty Museum. When this happens with such frequency, one is entitled to wonder whether these omissions are accidental.

My deepest regret is for the brilliant young artists who we feature in these concerts. To treat them with such contempt is to do a grave disservice to the new generation of gifted artists, many of them born and trained in California, some of them already widely recognized and applauded internationally, and only trampled upon when they appear on their home turf. (I refer you to the closing sentence in Perlmutter’s review.) These are discouraging, demoralizing experiences for a young artist. It takes

⁷ Transcription note: This sentence is likely referencing a review by Donna Perlmutter, not Albert Goldberg.

⁸ Transcription note: This sentence is possibly referencing reviews by Donna Perlmutter and Albert Goldberg.

years to develop the kind of thick skin required to survive in this climate.

Yours cordially,
Henri Temianka

One can perhaps read these closing statements of cordiality as Temianka winking at Bernheimer⁹ in acknowledgment of their intense, if sometimes opposing, passion for their respective and shared crafts in the music world. Their relationship, while heated at times, perhaps retained a strained respect that speaks to Temianka's ability to assert and defend his position, as a musician standing up against the critic, boldly while still maintaining professionalism and cordiality.

Reference image: [[Henri Temianka Photographs, Publicity](#)].

Reference image: [[Henri Temianka Correspondence; \(photographs\)](#)].

Reference image: [[Henri Temianka \(Concert Programs\), Paganini Quartet](#)].

Even when the critics presented as less than amiable to Temianka's impassioned letters, his friends - usually fellow musicians he specifically defended and otherwise - remained unrelentingly supportive and expressed this support through letters to the *LA Times*. Temianka's friends supported his outspokenness, as evidenced by several letters.

Reference telegram: [[Henri Temianka Correspondence; \(nilson\), H. Spencer Nilson](#)].

In a gesture that illustrates the sheer unprofessionalism of the critics with whom Temianka sparred, musician H. Spencer Nilson wrote in January of 1980 that "the recent review by Bernheimer of Temianka's chamber symphony was so outrageously unjust that it reflects on the journalistic integrity of your fine paper. This kind of warped and unjustified report can only bring suspicion on the validity of any future articles by him."

Reference letter: [[Henri Temianka Correspondence; \(lees\), Benjamin Lees](#)].

Reference letter: [[Henri Temianka Photographs, Professional Acquaintances, Norman Hoyt](#)].

⁹ Transcription note: This sentence is possibly referencing several music critics, not just Martin Bernheimer.

Similarly, his colleague Benjamin Lees wrote in 1965 that he had received a note from Goldberg that he was printing the letter in the *LA Times*. He thanked him for his “marvelous letter,” stating that “it was stated with utmost clarity and the points struck home straight and true.” Even outside of direct correspondence with him, his peers relentlessly offered support for Temianka’s work, musicianship, and integrity against the wrath of the critic, writing letters themselves to the *LA Times* in protest.

Reference letter: [[Henri Temianka Correspondence; \(lte\), Allan H. Kurtzman](#)].

Reference image: [[Henri Temianka conducting](#)].

In response to a snarky review from John Rockwell, another member of the music criticism staff, Allan Kurtzman wrote to Otis Chandler in 1971: “I read with astonishment John Rockwell’s music review your May 4 issue,” stating:

‘Temianka managed...to ally himself (somewhat ironically, considering his past record) with those who reject the quarantining of contemporary music’

Where has Mr. Rockwell been? By all means, let us look at Mr. Temianka’s ‘past record.’ This season alone he conducted the California Chamber Symphony’s premieres of Shostakovich’s 14th Symphony, the Menotti Triple Concerto a Tre, Powell’s Immobile V, Copland’s Emily Dickinson Songs, Milhaud’s Symphoniette (‘The very year we are saying farewell to Milhaud’, [...])

Last year it was Henri Temianka and the California Chamber Symphony who presented three world premieres by resident composers earning a grant from the National Endowment for the Arts in recognition of this contribution to the cultural life of Los Angeles. The numerous major premieres which L.A. owes to Henri Temianka’s tireless initiative range [...]

Temianka’s ‘past record’ speaks for itself. We hope *The Times* will acknowledge it.

Reference letter: [[Henri Temianka Correspondence; \(kelly\), Walter Kelly](#)].

Walter Kelly, a fellow musician, wrote in 1979 that:

For your article on Los Angeles music critics (Westways, March 1979) you are to be congratulated and thanked. A commentary like yours has regrettably become necessary, and in my opinion has been long overdue. The critic of whom you speak, and his disciples, should long ago have been challenged in print about their tediously uncivil approach to musical criticism.

As one who has written several letters to the critic or his newspaper in protest against his treatment of operatic artists, especially those who are fatter than the critic thinks anyone deserves to be, I applaud your remarks.

It is to be hoped that your article will be more successful than my letters in persuading the critic that, at a time when civility is a vanishing virtue in our society, one in his position should not hasten its disappearance by repeated resort, in the name of art, to insult and invective.

Reference image: [[Henri Temianka Photographs, Professional Acquaintances, Doug Wilson](#)].

Reference image: [[Henri Temianka Photographs, Professional Acquaintances](#)]

Reference image: [[Henri Temianka Photographs, Publicity](#)]

Furthermore, outside of the close-knit community of fellow musicians, the archives of Henri Temianka illustrate, above all, his enduring reciprocal support of his fellow musicians, as well as his friends and loved ones. The vast majority of the letters addressed to Temianka in the archives I found were not critics' condescension, but warm letters from his students, his friends, and his respected peers. The archives also possess an abundance of photographs of Temianka at various events, smiling with students, peers, friends, and teachers. Even in the face of the petulant, patronizing criticism he faced, Temianka clearly managed to outshine any and all negativity with his musicianship, outreach, and his cordial spirit.

Reference image: [[Henri Temianka Correspondence; \(photographs\), Bronislaw Huberman](#)]

Reference image: [[Henri Temianka Correspondence; \(photographs\), Carel Blitz](#)]

Reference image: [[Henri Temianka Correspondence; \(photographs\), Willy Hess](#)]

Here we have photos of Temianka's peers that illustrate his far reaching influence and amicable connections. These are his fellow artists: violinist Bronislaw Huberman, violinist Carel Blitz, and musicologist and scholar Willy Hess.

Reference image: [[Henri Temianka Correspondence; \(photographs\)](#)].

Reference image: [[Henri Temianka Correspondence; \(photographs\)](#)].

Here we have Henri Temianka with Gregor Piatigorsky, Russian-born American cellist, and Temianka and classical pianist Leonard Pennario at the piano.

Reference image: [[Marni Nixon](#)].

Reference image: [[Henri Temianka Correspondence; \(nilson\), Marni Nixon](#)]

We also have a letter from Marni Nixon, a famous soprano, with the note: “Dear Henry, Once again let me thank you for a wonderful musical experience last evening. I was sorry to have left before hearing the Brahms; however, when I returned home I found that Ernest had taped the whole concert and I will be able to hear it now any time I want. Regards, and thank you for the flowers. Marni Nixon.”

Reference image: [[Henri Temianka Correspondence; \(photographs\), Aaron Copland](#)].

Reference image: [[Henri Temianka Correspondence; \(copland\), Aaron Copland](#)].

Notably Aaron Copland, the acclaimed composer, maintained a close friendship with Henri Temianka. In one letter, he wrote that he was pleased to have a letter from him and “to be brought up to date on [his] news, especially that of the 80th [birthday] celebration.”

Reference image: [[Henri Temianka Photographs, Professional Acquaintances, Shlomo Lavi](#)].

Reference image: [[Henri Temianka Correspondence; \(photographs\), Ray Bradbury](#)].

Reference image: [[Henri Temianka Correspondence; \(photographs\), Henri Temianka](#)].

Reference image: [[Henri Temianka Photographs, Professional Acquaintances](#)].

Reference image: [[Henri Temianka photographs, professional acquaintances](#)].

Temianka’s relations also extended beyond the music world to writers, politicians, and actors. Here we have Shlomo Lavi, an activist and politician, and Ray Bradbury, the famous author. We have Temianka with Kirk Douglas, Shirley MacLaine, and Thomas Mann.

I have also included a heartwarming letter from one of Temianka’s fellow musicians,

written after working with Temianka, which illustrates the overwhelming gratitude and sense of community that Temianka's impressive career in music evoked, a legacy far more enduring than the bitterness of the critics. Cellist Nancy Short writes:

My dearest Mr. Temianka, I cannot begin to express my deep appreciation and admiration for all you've done not only for the orchestra but for me this last week. Never have I met such a man whose life seemed so full of music-someone who makes even the scales sound beautiful. It's very difficult for me to say what I feel and the sadness that comes from the absence of something as important as yourself. I have never been so inspired by anyone in my whole life. And the inspiration that was so short, will remain in my memory and thoughts for as long as I live.

God has already blessed you tremendously but for a selfish reason I wish a long life so that you may continue to make music not only for yourself but for the benefit of others and the world. Thank-you again so very much.

Very truly yours,
Nancy Short
cellist.

CONCLUSION

Reference letter's signature: [[Henri Temianka Correspondence; \(istone\), Henri Temianka](#)].

Indeed, Henri Temianka performed many roles in his life - as a musician, conductor, teacher, father, son, and husband, but also notably, as I have outlined in this lecture, the role of defender of the arts, defender of music, defender of musicians, his friends and his loved ones. He championed artists and artistry as a sacred space- indeed, he was quoted for once saying, "while not immune to criticism, the musicians should certainly retain dignity and reverence."

Temianka's criticisms of the *Los Angeles Times'* music critics appear to not so much petulantly defend what he perceived was actually a good performance, but criticize what he perceived as unnecessarily biting and petulant on their part - criticism that isolated those who knew less than the critic and discouraged the hard work of the honest, brave musicians that Temianka so respected in the concert hall. Temianka famously said, "it's easy to avoid criticism -- just say nothing, do nothing, be nothing." His fearless approach to his craft and fearless

defense of his community illustrate that he practiced what he preached in this regard.

Reference image: [[Henri Temianka Photographs, Professional Acquaintances, Larry Lee](#)].

I also want to address - why are special collections and archives important, and in particular, why are the ones of Henri Temianka? In 1950, when Temianka was still a first violinist with the Paganini Quartet, he noted in an interview that in contemporary times, “we tend to forget everything but the moment. The older I get, the more I realize that there are ever fewer witnesses to the cultural history of the 20th Century, and especially the cultural history of Los Angeles. As a society we’re becoming criminally forgetful of people who’ve been so important to us.”

Reference image: [[Henri Temianka Photographs, Professional Acquaintances, Keller Photo](#)].

Reference image: [[Henri Temianka Photographs, Professional Acquaintances](#)].

Reference image: [[Henri Temianka Photographs, Professional Acquaintances](#)].

It is thanks not only to Henri Temianka’s transcendent influence as a musician, but also to the archives so generously provided by his son, Daniel Temianka, that he will not be forgotten. Through the persistence of these archives that I have spent the last several months studying, Henri Temianka was not only so important to his loved ones and his peers, but also to the lasting culture of Los Angeles and its artistic contributions. I have seen how these relics reveal just as much about musicianship, loyalty, and defending one’s passion in the volatile times of today, as they do of the past. Temianka’s perseverance amidst criticism, relentless defense of his art and his fellow artists, humorous and passionate reflections, and sense of dignity all warrant the continued study of his archives at Leatherby Libraries. It has been an honor to be able to shed light on his stories, illuminating their relevance to the present state of music and music culture. Thank you so much.

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