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Henri Temianka Correspondence; (bernheimer)

Henri Temianka

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Recommended Citation

Temianka, Henri, "Henri Temianka Correspondence; (bernheimer)" (1972). *Henri Temianka Correspondence*. 173.

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Description

This collection contains material pertaining to the life, career, and activities of Henri Temianka, violin virtuoso, conductor, music teacher, and author. Materials include correspondence, concert programs and flyers, music scores, photographs, and books.

Keywords

Henri Temianka, Martin Bernheimer, December 18, 1972, newspaper, chamber music, recreation and entertainment, culture, camaraderie, virtuosity in musical performance, music critics, orchestra, concerts, soloist, violinist, recordings, discontent, Albert Schweitzer, concerto

December 18, 1972

Mr. Martin Bernheimer
Los Angeles Times
Times Mirror Square
Los Angeles, California 90053

My dear Martin:

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-informed". No less an authority than Albert Schweitzer in his J.S. Bach writes (Volume Two, page 449-50, Dover Edition):

With regard to the question as to whether the figuring should be realised simply or freely, a remark of Rochlitz's has caused a lot of mischief. He says that in Bach's time the accompanying cembalist or organist "did not merely strike the chords, but freely added melodic sequences of his own in the upper part and ingenious combinations in the middle parts," and that Bach himself particularly excelled in this art. From this it seemed to go without saying that Bach's figuring really only served the player as a harmonic starting-point for an original accompaniment conceived in the general spirit of the work. Rochlitz's remark is correct as far as it goes; only he forgets to add that it refers to what Bach used to do with the meagre and imperfect figurings of others, not to his practice with regard to his own thorough-bass, (my emphasis) which with its rich and uninterrupted figuring, of itself supplies the "fantasy" he desired in the accompaniment of his works.

We performed the Bach E major Violin Concerto accordingly. If the harpsichord part was not heard adequately, a more charitable critic might have concluded that a harpsichord is not heard to best advantage in an auditorium the size of Royce Hall.

Incidentally, you were apparently in San Francisco when I wrote you my first letter, for which reason I thought it expedient to send a copy to Wayne Warga. There was no unfriendly intent. One of my most distinguished musical colleagues cautioned me against starting this correspondence, saying, "When a performer engages a critic in debate, he always ends up being the loser." I don't believe it.

Yours cordially,

Henri Temianka

HT/cp
cc: Wayne Warga
Daniel Cariaga

*All
envelope
marked
Personal*