

Beauty of lower tuning draws new endorsements

On Saturday night, Nov. 5, American television viewers nationwide were treated to a unique demonstration of what a Verdi opera would sound like if it were sung at the pitch the great Italian composer desired. In the course of a presidential election campaign broadcast, independent candidate Lyndon LaRouche showed a brief clip from last April's historic Schiller Institute conference in Milan, Italy, where the world-renowned baritone Piero Cappuccilli sang part of the aria, "Nel balen di tuo sorriso" from *Il Trovatore*, first at the tuning of A = 432 as intended by Verdi, and then at today's higher concert pitch of A = 440.

The Italian baritone showed how the "color" of the music was distorted at the higher tuning.

Maestro Cappuccilli is one of the leaders from the operatic world of an initiative to return to the classical composers' lower tuning pitch, and is backing a bill now before the Italian Senate to establish A = 432, which is equivalent to the "physicists' tuning" of a Middle C set to 256 cycles per second, as the official tuning fork in Italy. He praised LaRouche for his efforts to organize this initiative to save singers' voices, and the musical classics.

Meanwhile, a new group of internationally famous artists from both the world of opera and the classical German song form known as the *lied* have added their names to a petition supporting the Italian legislation, which was introduced by Senators Mezzapesa and Boggio.

The initiative has now won the backing of nearly every

great soprano alive, starting with Renata Tebaldi, who addressed the Milan conference. Miss Tebaldi reigned supreme over the Verdi repertoire at the Metropolitan Opera of New York, from the 1950s until she retired from the opera stage 11 years ago.

In October, soprano Dame **Joan Sutherland** and her husband, conductor Sir **Richard Bonyng**e, were delighted to sign the petition. The world-famous Australian couple is known for promoting the beautiful and demanding operas of the Italian "bel canto" era, having revived and recorded many seldom-heard works by Rossini, Donizetti, and Bellini from the early part of the last century.

Two American-born Metropolitan Opera sopranos, **Leona Mitchell** and **Grace Bumbry**, have also recently signed the petition. Speaking from Milan, Miss Bumbry, who began as a mezzosoprano and now sings dramatic soprano roles, said that the "Verdi tuning" should be made standard not only in Italy, but around the world. **Louis Quilico**, a baritone from Canada who sings the great Verdi roles at the Metropolitan Opera, also signed.

Among *lieder* specialists—singers of the songs by Schubert, Beethoven, Mozart, Schumann, and Brahms—**Dietrich Fischer-Dieskau**, the German baritone, is outstanding. Not only has he performed and recorded the entire Schubert song repertoire, but is author of a book on Schubert *lieder*. Fischer-Dieskau signed the petition backing the Italian A = 432 tuning law in October, along with **Elly Ameling**, the Dutch soprano considered by many to be the top female *lieder* recitalist singing today. Earlier, other great *lieder* artists, the German bass Kurt Moll, German tenor Peter Schreier, and Austrian mezzosoprano Christa Ludwig, had endorsed the A = 432 campaign; like Fischer-Dieskau, these singers also frequently perform as soloists in classical oratorio and opera.

The trade is distorted because the ruble is pegged a notch above the U.S. dollar when in reality it is worth no more than U.S. 25¢. But from the Indian viewpoint that does not seem to matter, since the payments are made in rupees which otherwise have very few takers in the world market. More importantly, India can buy from the Soviet Union using rupees such essential items as MiG fighter aircraft, T-72 tanks, Kilo-class submarines and all sorts of military hardware which the West often refuses to sell to India even against hard currencies. The Indian rupees also buy a lot of Soviet technology.

It is also significant to note that the Soviet Union is coming in in a big way to help India overcome the dire electrical power shortage which has stunted agricultural and industrial growth. The Soviet Union has agreed to provide India with two nuclear power plants, 1,000 MWe each, at terms ac-

ceptable to India. Recently India's Energy Minister Vasant Sathe announced that the Soviet Union would provide assistance to create an additional capacity of 6,000 MW in the power sector during 1990-2000 A.D.

Besides the power sector, the Soviets are involved in almost every aspect of India's industrial and technological development. The deals, which have been coming in torrents since Gorbachov took over Moscow, are beneficial for both. The Soviets, who find it hard to market their products and somewhat backward technologies, are happy to give them away at reasonable prices. India, also finding it difficult to market its products in large volume and earn sufficient foreign exchange, is happy to buy with rupees what they probably could not have bought even if they had hard currency.

It is an arrangement which is expected to outlast the geopoliticians.