

Renata Tebaldi to run for European Parliament

World-famous Italian soprano Renata Tebaldi, the “angel’s voice,” who still today is a symbol for bel canto singing and classical culture around the world, will run as an independent candidate on the slate of the Patriots of Italy for the European Parliament next June. The announcement was made by Helga Zepp-LaRouche, initiator of the Patriots slates for the European Parliament, during the conference on “Giuseppe Verdi and the Scientific Tuning Fork” on Feb. 10 in Parma, Italy.

“The compromise reached in the Italian Senate on the legislation we proposed to return to Verdi’s low tuning in order to save voices and classical interpretation,” Mrs. LaRouche said in announcing the Patriots slate, “demonstrates the weakness and corruption of the political institutions which were not even able to respect and defend Verdi’s will. It also shows how important it is for us to emerge in Europe as a new institution which is able to reject any compromises on scientific ideas and principles.”

In her message to the conference, Tebaldi herself explained that “the politicians’ decision to abandon Verdi’s proposed tuning of $A = 432$ Hz, the scientific tuning, for a compromise on $A = 440$, demonstrates that the senators are not willing to change anything. Their decision is due to commercial considerations and has nothing to do with our culture and the need to safeguard our music heritage, which is the one that made us famous all over the world.” Because of her determination “to prevent opera and classical music from dying because of the incompetence of present political and government institutions,” Tebaldi agreed to run as an independent candidate for the European Parliament on the Patriots of Italy slate.

Together with her on the slate, running on the same classical culture agenda, are Fedora Barbieri and Prof. Bruno Barosi, director of the Acoustical Laboratory of the Violin Building School in Cremona, who has worked with the Schiller Institute in its efforts to revive Verdi’s scientific tuning in order to save the precious old Cremona stringed instruments. Mezzosoprano Barbieri is famed for her singing of such Verdi roles as Azucena in *Il Trovatore*, which she recorded with Zinka Milanov and Jussi Bjorling in a legendary recording.

Giuseppe Verdi: $A = 432$ only scientific tuning

by Marco Fanini

In the course of the debate over the rising tuning pitch, the Italian daily *La Stampa* recently wrote that the “limit of 432 Hz has been maintained by the Schiller Institute, whereas Verdi had supported a limit of 435.” Considering the fact that some musicologists publicly support the same thesis, we believe that *La Stampa* did not stumble into a error, but deliberately published a thesis whose falsity we shall demonstrate once again in this article.

First let’s hear from the man directly concerned, Giuseppe Verdi, who wrote to Arrigo Boito on Nov. 8, 1885: “Principal aim: unity of the tuning fork. To concede, if one cannot do otherwise; but not without stating openly, loudly, and publicly, the error, from the scientific standpoint, of $A = 435$. You are a clear and able speaker, and you will easily set the truth in evidence. One could very well, with the authority of our Conservatories, declare that we maintain the $A = 432$ tuning because it is the most correct; but this firmness could seem like obstinacy, childishness that could almost lend itself to the ridiculous, and would be immediately caught by our brothers beyond the Alps.”

The background to this letter is that the poet and librettist Arrigo Boito represented Italy, together with Professor of Experimental Physics Pietro Blaserna, at the International Conference on the Tuning Fork, held in Vienna in 1885. That conference was the epilogue of a dispute on the subject that had gone on for several years. The French had adopted in 1859, a tuning fork of 435 vibrations and had asked the rest of Europe to unify the tuning on that metric. In 1881 a congress of scientists and musicians held in Milan came out in favor of an international standard pitch of A^3 (Concert A, or the A above Middle C) at 432 full vibrations per second. The Congress considered that since the tuning fork should be unified, they preferred, over the French tuning fork, called “normal,” the 432 tuning fork, called “scientific,” because of its relationship to a Middle C set at 256.

Initially Verdi supported the French pitch of 435, but then he became convinced by the scientists and he turned into a decisive advocate of the scientific $A = 432$ tuning fork, as