

The Italian Classical School

by Liliana Gorini

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Nov. 13—According to the Italian school of bel canto singing, placement (in Italian, *impostazione*, putting the voice in the right place) is achieved by “activating simultaneously all resonating chambers” of the human body—chest, throat, and head. One speaks of the “chest voice” for singing low notes, in the first register, and of the “head voice” (*registro di testa*) for singing high notes, in the third register (starting on F-sharp for tenors and sopranos) mainly using the head resonance. We see it clearly in Luca della Robbia’s bas-relief “La Cantoria” in Florence, in which children are singing in a choir, and some of them have an intense expression and tension in the *maschera* (around the eyes, the “mask”), which shows that they are using the head voice and singing in the third register.

A throaty voice is, by contrast, considered an unpleasant voice. Singing teachers in the tradition of the ancient Italian school of bel canto teach their students to use all of these resonances, and the human body becomes in this way a natural amplifier. That is why opera singers do not need microphones and can reach their listeners in very large opera houses, or even in the Arena of Verona, an outdoor opera house, without any amplification, while rock singers, who have no placement, have to almost eat the mike to be heard—even in the front row.

To channel the air up to the head voice, the bel canto singer needs support (*appoggio*), which means once again that from the diaphragm up to the head, the human voice is organized and focused like a concentrated laser beam, so much so that a great singer can break a light bulb with a high note, but the same note will not move the flame of a candle.

Verdi Baritone Cappuccilli

A great master of placement and support was Piero Cappuccilli, the Verdi baritone who participated in the first international conference on scientific pitch held in Milan, at the Casa Verdi, on April 9, 1988. Cappuccilli then provided the first example of how the right pitch (or Verdi tuning, A=432 Hz) is crucial, when performing Verdi operas, for achieving the color of the voice and register shifts intended by the composer. To demonstrate this, he sang a passage from Verdi's *Ernani* in both tunings, Verdi's (A=432 Hz) and today's.

Today's tuning varies from A=440 in the United States to A=448 in Berlin, Vienna, Florence, and Salzburg, according to reports to this writer from other famous singers who supported the Schiller Institute campaign to go back to the scientific pitch, such as tenors Luciano Pavarotti and Carlo Bergonzi.

The late Cappuccilli (1926-2005), a very good friend of Lyndon and Helga LaRouche, not only supported the Schiller Institute campaign for Verdi tuning, but also gave a master class in bel canto singing in Stuttgart, Germany, where he coached young conservatory students on how to sing and interpret Verdi. Once again, the question of placement was the key. Cappuccilli was famous for his very long phrases, twice as long as his colleague baritones; he once told me that he developed this capability thanks to his job as a diver in the Coast Guard in Trieste, his birthplace, before he started his career as a singer.

Of course, he also insisted on interpretation, since, as LaRouche indicates in the discussion published here, the mind is the source of the right placement, and it is the right interpretation which makes the difference between a decent singer producing a nice sound, and a true artist who is able to move his audience to tears.

Political Tuning

What is true for the human voice, is also true for a political movement. I believe Lyndon LaRouche is



Italian baritone Piero Cappuccilli in Giuseppe Verdi's opera "Simon Boccanegra."

using the idea of placement as a metaphor for how a political movement should function. If in placement you "activate simultaneously all resonating chambers" to get a beautiful tone, in a political movement you have to simultaneously activate all locals, all chapters, and all activists in order to achieve the maximum result.

An example of this is our Glass-Steagall campaign. We have achieved results, including making Glass-Steagall the key issue of the U.S. 2016 presidential campaign, thanks to an international campaign on this issue, including the many letters of support for the Glass-Steagall bills in the U.S. Congress that we generated from members of Parliament in Italy and all over Europe. As chairwoman of MoviSol—LaRouche's movement in Italy—

in my discussions with members of Parliament and conferences on this issue, I often showed the LaRouche PAC map indicating the many resolutions for Glass-Steagall approved by state legislatures, as a result of the mobilization of activists and other citizens in the various states.

In Italy, as all over Europe, many people are demoralized as a result of the economic crisis, and believe that nothing can be done to overcome it, and to shut down Wall Street and the City of London. Showing them that we are mobilizing simultaneously all over the world on this issue, was vital for remoralizing them, and activating them to send messages to their political representatives, nationally and locally, to demand that they introduce Glass-Steagall bills or resolutions.

As a result, we have eight such Glass-Steagall bills in the Italian Parliament, and four regional councils (corresponding to a state legislatures)—Tuscany, Lombardy, Veneto, and Piedmont—have approved a resolution for Glass-Steagall. Another good example of "placement."