

5-10-1971

Henri Temianka Correspondence; (lte)

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Recommended Citation

Kurtzman, Allan H., "Henri Temianka Correspondence; (lte)" (1971). *Henri Temianka Correspondence*. 2076.
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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, culture, virtuosity in musical performance, violinist, chamber music, camaraderie, press, May 10, 1971, California Chamber Symphony Society, money, funds

May 10, 1971

Editor

Los Angeles Times
Times Mirror Square
Los Angeles, California 90053

Sir:

I read with astonishment John Rockwell's music review in 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 Symphoniettes ("The very year we are saying farewell to Milhaud", laments Bernheimer in the Times of May 7. Who said farewell to Milhaud? Only the California Chamber Symphony under Henri Temianka, who brought the master in person to Los Angeles to conduct his own works.)

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 from Ginastera to William Schuman. They, like Milhaud, Menotti, Chavez, and others, traveled vast distances to be present at what they evidently considered events of sufficient importance.

Temianka's "past record" speaks for itself. We hope the Times, will acknowledge it.

Cordially yours,

Allan H. Kurtzman, Vice President
Chamber Symphony Society of California, Inc.

cc: Mr. Otis Chandler

Chamber Orchestra Concert

6230
BY JOHN ROCKWELL
Times Staff Writer

If the California Chamber Symphony's concert Sunday night at UCLA's Royce Hall failed to make complete sense as a cumulatively constructed entity—Mozart's "Haffner" Serenade, which came after the intermission, is too rambling and unwieldy for that—it still boasted sufficient felicities to make most reasonable men happy.

From the point of view of newsworthiness, at least, the highlight of the evening was the premiere of an "Immobile" for orchestra and tape by Mel Powell.

With that act of programming, in direct competition with the opening of the Philharmonic's Contempo 71 series, Temianka managed simultaneously to ally himself (somewhat ironically, considering his past record) with those who reject the quarantining of contemporary music, and to recall Powell's celebrated walkout after an interrupted Philharmonic performance of his "Immobiles" Nos. 1-4 during last year's Contempo 70.

A Favor

Polemics apart, Temianka did everybody a favor in providing a forum for not only the orchestral music of one of this town's most distinguished composers, but for that composer himself, in a typically witty, suave and Mephistophelean spoken introduction.

The actual piece—seven minutes of carefully arranged aleatoric sonorities, purposefully static and kaleidoscopic in effect, made a somewhat bland impression. Certainly the musicians seemed to be responding to Powell's cues with a proper blend of respect and individual initiative. Maybe it takes a larger, lusher orchestra to overwhelm the listener with sound and to mask the transitions more subtly—an orchestra like the Philharmonic, perhaps?

Sunday's concert also

included the West Coast premiere and second performance anywhere of Aaron Copland's newly orchestrated Eight Songs of Emily Dickinson.

The new version sounds, simply, gorgeous: grateful for the voice, orchestrated with a sense for romantic impetus and clarity of articulation which recalls Mahler, more of a complement to the piano-accompanied original of 1950 than a replacement.

Solo Part

Margery MacKay sang the solo part with a fine blend of mezzo-soprano warmth and interpretive empathy, and Temianka and his forces partnered her sympathetically.

The concert began and ended with Mozart: a charming example from the series of Mozart Bach-transcriptions Temianka has been offering this season and the "Haffner" Serenade.

The conductor chose to drop two of the Serenade's eight movements and to dispense as well with the

prefatory March, K. 249, a perfectly legitimate option. But in justifying his decision he rather muddled the issue by coupling the "Haffner" Serenade with the thematically unrelated "Haffner" Symphony.

Musicological confusions aside, he and the orchestra turned out a sometimes gruff but heartfelt and well-played performance.