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### From the Directors

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## From the Directors

### **Keywords**

American Institute for Verdi Studies

**“From the Directors”**

The past year has been a time of both celebration and reflection for the AIVS. In October we observed Verdi’s 200<sup>th</sup> birthday with a very successful conference at New York University. *Verdi’s Third Century: Italian Opera Today* brought together scholars and performers from across the United States and Europe to explore the unprecedented variety of ways in which Verdi and his works are currently being explored and celebrated. At the conference we presented the inaugural Martin Chusid Award for Verdi Studies to Gundula Kreuzer for her monograph *Verdi and the Germans: From Unification to the Third Reich* (Cambridge University Press, 2011; reviewed by Alexandra Wilson in *Verdi Forum* 35–36). Future issues of *Verdi Forum* will include some of the papers that were presented at this eye-opening event.

But 2013 was also bookended by sadness. In January we learned of the passing of Mary Jane Phillips-Matz. While Mary Jane is widely known as the award-winning author of the monumental *Verdi: A Biography* (Oxford University Press, 1992), her service to Verdi studies encompasses much more. By helping to establish the AIVS, and later by facilitating our filming of primary sources at Verdi’s Sant’Agata estate and in other private collections, she made possible the research of countless scholars. A memorial tribute to Mary Jane appears on page 8 of this issue.

Near the close of the year, on December 11, Martin Chusid passed away at his home in Connecticut. Without Martin there simply would have been no American Institute for Verdi Studies. As one of our founders, and our Director until his retirement in 2007, he had the vision and determination to establish what he called “an organization that would link the unprecedented recent surge of interest in Verdi research with performances of his music.” Martin brought to the job a highly effective combination of deep knowledge, scholarly curiosity, contagious enthusiasm, organizational ability, and fundraising prowess. The Institute and especially its Archive are ongoing testaments to his dedication. On pages 3–7 you will find tributes from scholars and performers who knew Martin Chusid as a friend, colleague, and mentor. We two, as his students, former archivists, and his successors at the helm of the AIVS, can only marvel at what he was able to accomplish in a life dedicated to discovering and sharing the essence of humanity as expressed in the music of Mozart, Schubert, and, above all, Verdi.

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