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“Go to the piano!”

It was the fall of 1995. I had just arrived at New York University as a first-year graduate student, and on my first day of classes I began attending Martin Chusid’s seminar on Franz Schubert’s *Schwanengesang*. Martin’s published scholarship was one of the factors that drove me to NYU in the first place. I knew not only of his work on Schubert, but also of his pioneering publications on Giuseppe Verdi, which included essays on subjects ranging from formal procedures to tonal analysis, *The Verdi Companion* co-edited with William Weaver, and, of course, his critical edition of *Rigoletto*, which inaugurated *The Works of Giuseppe Verdi* published by Casa Ricordi and the University of Chicago Press. And I knew of the extraordinary collection of materials on Verdi and nineteenth-century Italian opera that he had assembled in the Archive of the American Institute for Verdi Studies.

But when I first walked into the music seminar room in the fall of 1995, I was certainly not prepared to hear Martin Chusid’s deep, vibrating bass voice tell me firmly: “go to the piano!” We were discussing Schubert’s *Die Taubenpost*, and Martin wanted to fill our space not only with words, scores, and marks energetically drawn on a chalkboard, but also with sound. For him, score-based study of music served to complement and enrich our perception of, but never to substitute for, the experience of the music as sound.

Beneath the thick skin of a veteran (a veteran indeed: born in Brooklyn on August 19, 1925, he had fought in the final phases of World War II) beat a heart filled with curiosity and open to novel questions and approaches. Into his eighth and ninth decades, Martin continued to explore themes and issues already familiar and dear to him (such as textual criticism and the analysis of opera and vocal music), while developing fresh approaches to unfamiliar ones, from censorship to performance practice and conceptual staging in opera. Among other things, Martin sought to question the myth of individual authorship in the nineteenth century—for example, by attributing important developments in Verdi’s “middle period” to the presence, involvement, and driving force of Giuseppina Strepponi.

That heart continued to beat with and for music with undiminished energy until December 11, 2013, when Martin passed away unexpectedly at his home in Connecticut. He is survived by his wife, Anita, and their son, Jeffrey. As I cope with the loss of a wonderful teacher, mentor, and friend, I am delighted that he lived long enough to celebrate the bicentennial of Giuseppe Verdi’s birth this past October. He attended most of the “Verdi’s Third Century” Conference at New York University, thoroughly engaged and genuinely happy. Even more than the composer he loved so deeply, he remained active until the end. Michael Beckerman, Professor in the NYU Music Department, reminded me a few days ago that in recent times Martin used to say: “I’m doing my best work yet!” Although Martin is no longer with us, that work is. In his final two years he completed and published two books: *Verdi’s “Il trovatore”*: *The Quintessential Italian Melodrama* (2012) and *Schubert’s Dances: For Family, Friends and Posterity* (2013). If that isn’t a crowning achievement, I don’t know what it is. And these weren’t meant to be his last: he was already at work on a Verdi reader, a monograph on *Rigoletto* and *La traviata*, and an essay on Schubert based on a 2011 conference paper he gave at Maynooth, Ireland. But in the days immediately following his death, it was his exhortation to “go to the piano” that kept coming back to my mind. As I mourn the loss of that voice, I cherish the

memory of a great moment of musical sharing and learning; it was the first of many, and I will remember it for as long as I live.

Francesco Izzo

Senior Lecturer, University of Southampton
Co-Director, American Institute for Verdi Studies

Several of Martin Chusid's colleagues and protégés remember him here.

Martin Chusid was a great friend of the Casa Italiana Zerilli-Marimò. From our foundation, he shared with us exciting and fun projects including exhibits, conferences, and concerts. He had an encyclopedic musical knowledge that knew no limits, although most of our dealings obviously revolved around Verdi. My most vivid memory of Martin, however, is not from the Casa Italiana but from a taxi ride with him and Anita, returning from the Metropolitan opera. We had just seen a Verdi opera (I have to confess, I don't remember which one; he probably would have), and I shamelessly took advantage of riding home with him to ask him all sorts of post-performance questions. We came to talk about Verdi's life and I noticed that at one point his voice broke with emotion and a tear appeared in his eye. That's the image of Martin Chusid I'll always treasure: a world-wide authority on Verdi, still moved by the great composer after dedicating decades of his life to studying and teaching him.

Stefano Albertini

Director, Casa Italiana Zerilli-Marimò

I first met Martin in spring 1984 at New York University, where he proudly informed me of the rich archives of the American Institute for Verdi Studies. He was among the first American musicologists to recognize the crucial significance of operatic production material that included *disposizioni sceniche*, stage and costume designs, and administrative records of opera houses. Martin's role in providing access to documents, including the correspondence of Francesco Maria Piave, the composer's librettist and stage director, granted me a greater understanding and appreciation of Verdi's acuity into the stagings of his operas.

Evan Baker

Independent scholar, Los Angeles

Martin Chusid was a trailblazer in Verdi studies, first with his *Catalog of Verdi's Operas* (1974), then the *Verdi Companion* (with William Weaver; 1979), the first volume in the critical edition of Verdi's works (*Rigoletto*; 1983), and finally the first full-length study of *Il trovatore* (2012). To me, however, he was primarily the founding director of the American Institute for Verdi Studies, a treasure-trove of sources collected over decades and selflessly made available to scholars from all over the world. During a recent conference dinner in celebration of Verdi's 200th birthday, I was lucky to be sitting with Martin and his charming wife, Anita, hearing about his future scholarly projects and the secrets for a long and happy marriage.

Andreas Giger

Louise and Kenneth L. Kinney Professor of
Musicology, Louisiana State University

When we had to choose someone to start the Verdi edition, we chose Martin Chusid, of course. He had done so much for Verdi studies, both by himself and with his students. And I was very pleased that he was there for the Verdi conference in New York this past autumn. It was the last time I saw him, but he seemed to be willing to follow scholarship wherever it led. He was a remarkable man in so many ways. I was most pleased to provide a statement about his work for his wonderful book about *Il trovatore*, probably the last important thing he did for Verdi, published just before the composer's 200th birthday. Others who worked with Martin over many years will know more details about his life and works, but I know that we could not have chosen a better representative of Verdi scholarship to begin our series of critical editions with *Rigoletto* some thirty years ago. And I remember very well being with him in Vienna for the first performance based on the edition, conducted by Riccardo Muti, the greatest friend we have had in our work, nor will I easily forget the glee with which Muti worked with Chusid's edition of the opera.

Martin's American Institute for Verdi Studies has been a beacon for all of us, for the fabulous collection of Verdi sources it contains, as a monument to his vision, and for the conference he organized in Northern Ireland (1993) and the *Macbeth* conference he arranged at Centre College (1977). Where would the Istituto Nazionale di Studi Verdiani in Parma be were it not for Martin's extraordinary presence as Director of the American Institute? We did not always agree on all matters Verdian, but no matter: he earned the respect and affection of all who knew him well, and that is saying as much as one can say about anyone.

Philip Gossett

Robert W. Reneker Distinguished Service
Professor Emeritus, University of Chicago
General Editor, *The Works of Giuseppe Verdi*

The last time I saw Martin was on October 13, 2013—the final day of the “Verdi's Third Century” Conference at New York University. He seemed in radiant good health, and I never would have guessed that he would be gone so soon. Martin and I knew each other for a long time—at least 60 years. He had been my father's teaching assistant at the University of California at Berkeley, and more than once he was a babysitter for my brothers and me. When I moved to New York, Martin was always unfailingly generous to me and fully supportive of my work. One of the foremost Verdi scholars of his generation, Martin made vital contributions to Verdi studies; his books remain among the most useful volumes in any Verdi scholar's library. His edition of *Rigoletto* was the very first volume to appear in *The Works of Giuseppe Verdi*. He founded the American Institute for Verdi Studies at New York University and as its Director built a comprehensive archive of Verdi source materials that has no equal in this country or in Europe. We will all miss his tireless efforts in our field, as well as his enthusiastic support of and encouragement for our own work.

David Lawton

Professor, Stony Brook University
Artistic Director, Stony Brook Opera

I first met Martin Chusid when, as a fledgling Ph.D. candidate at Brandeis University, I traveled to New York University to consult resources at the American Institute for Verdi Studies. He generously opened the archive, providing me access to any and all material I wished to see, and we enjoyed a lovely lunch together, during which he grilled me about my work, asked probing questions, and offered advice. From that time on, Martin's scholarly generosity was what defined him for me: he offered ongoing support of various kinds by including me in his many collaborative projects, inviting me to contribute to the AIVS journal, and ensuring that I had whatever resources the Institute could offer. I am immensely grateful for his efforts and energies; his work in the field of Verdi studies will be missed.

Roberta Montemorra Marvin
Editor, *Verdi Forum*
Associate Professor, University of Iowa

I met Martin because his son, Jeff, played in the Yale Symphony when I was its music director in the late 1960s and early 70s. I went to Martin for advice about editions, and it was Martin's critical edition of *Rigoletto* that changed my life as a performer of Verdi and as a writer on the subject of analyzing music from distinctly non-traditional points of view. When I studied Martin's edition, it became clear that the most unusual aspect of the score was the tempo indications: both the "affect" of the tempo (Italian terms such as *Andante sostenuto*) and how to achieve it (the metronome markings). In his wonderful way, he said, "John. Try them. They are Verdi's. See if they work." That is when I discovered that they were structural—and they worked! Verdi's building blocks were not based on keys and pitches, but on a combination of an epigrammatic melodic theme that could be expanded into longer forms and the use of pulse to hold the opera together. This led to articles and more discoveries and performances that illuminated Verdi's intentions and his genius. I can never fully thank Martin for his support and for what that support has achieved in our understanding of how Verdi designed his operas.

John Mauceri
Conductor and composer
Founding Director, Hollywood Bowl Orchestra

I shall always regard dear in my musicological career the heady excitement of the founding of the American Institute for Verdi Studies right at the start of my graduate years at New York University, and I especially treasure the opportunity afforded me when Martin accepted me as the first student archivist to help him build what was to become a serious U.S. collection of primary source materials for Verdi studies. Stimulated in large part also by the significance of the *Macbeth* conference of 1977, I eagerly set about preparing for the daunting work that lay ahead: several summers in a row and one full academic year in Italy microfilming as much significant correspondence and as many relevant librettos and scores as we could access. No doubt, it was Martin's wonderful vision and support throughout the process—particularly the important inventorying and filming at Sant'Agata—that helped jumpstart the creation of a

significant archive that has continued through these many years to prove invaluable for scholars worldwide.

John Nádas

Gerhard L. Weinberg Distinguished Professor,
University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill

Martin Chusid was an essential presence in Verdi studies through most of my career. Without the American Institute for Verdi Studies in New York, and without his amazing entrepreneurial energy, our Verdian world would have been smaller and far less interesting. His legacy is a lasting one.

Roger Parker

Thurston Dart Professor of Music,
King's College London

It was with great sadness that I learned of the passing of Martin Chusid. Martin founded the American Institute for Verdi Studies a few years after I founded Opera Orchestra of New York for the purpose of investigating and performing the lesser known works of the great masters. The first year of our existence brought the concert version of *I Lombardi alla Prima crociata*, which we have done twice more, most recently in April 2013. Martin was a tremendous inspiration to me as I presented rarely performed works of Verdi such as *I due Foscari*, *Giovanna d'Arco*, *I masnadieri*, and *Aroldo*. He wrote program notes and musical analysis for our performance of *I vespri siciliani*. The tremendous value of Martin's contributions remains in the great library and in the dedicated musicians and scholars who will continue his work.

Eve Queler

Founder and Conductor Laureate,
Opera Orchestra of New York

After Martin's M.A. thesis on Mozart's instrumental sonata-rondos and his Ph.D. dissertation on Schubert's chamber music, who could have guessed that he would extend his gaze to Giuseppe Verdi? And what good fortune for Verdi studies that he did! From his paper at the first International Verdi Conference in 1966 to his monograph on *Il trovatore* published last year, his nearly fifty years of research greatly enriched our understanding of the composer and his works. And by founding the American Institute for Verdi Studies, he also established a *point d'appui* for Verdi studies on this continent. With the AIVS came the Archive, the *Verdi Newsletter* (the forerunner of this journal), and important conferences that led to important publications. All Verdians—scholars, performers, and opera-goers alike—owe Martin an immense debt of gratitude.

David B. Rosen

Professor Emeritus, Cornell University