

generally includes an interpretation of the song's meaning or significance. It may include musical and textual analysis and clarification and an explanation of the song's relationship to other Schumann songs or compositions in other forms. The book begins with a chapter on Schumann as a song writer, and includes the author's theory of recurring motives or ciphers in Schumann's music.

SCHUMANN, *Dichterliebe*. Edited by Arthur Komar. Norton Critical Scores. New York: W. W. Norton & Co., 1971.

The most comprehensive resource work on the subject. Sections include an historical background, an annotated score of *Dichter-*

liebe, essays in analysis, views, and commentary.

WALSH, STEPHEN, *The Lieder of Schumann*. New York: Praeger Publishers, 1971.

This is the best survey of the songs. The opening chapter discusses Schumann's literary background and the circumstances that led him to song writing after ten years of composing for the piano. A chapter is given to each of the three periods of song composition, with particular attention to the songs of 1840. There is a chapter on the important song cycles. The concluding chapter is an evaluation of Schumann as a song writer in terms of his choice of poets, use of form, melodic

and harmonic idiom, and his treatment of texts.

YOUNG, PERCY A., *Tragic Muse: The Life and Works of Robert Schumann*. Rev. ed. London: Dennis Dobson, 1961.

A life and works. Chapter eight is a very perceptive essay on the songs.

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SINGING AND COMMERCIAL TELEVISION

A PRONOUNCEMENT OF THE AMERICAN ACADEMY OF TEACHERS OF SINGING

A full generation of young people has been denied the opportunity of hearing singing of good quality on commercial TV.

Four decades ago popular weekly radio programs offered such fine artists as Richard Crooks, Jessica Dragonette, Nelson Eddy, Dorothy Kirsten, James Melton, Grace Moore, Frank Munn, Gladys Swarthout, Conrad Thibault, John Charles Thomas, Lawrence Tibbett, Helen Traubel and many other singers of high calibre.

One remembers with nostalgia the music of Friml, Gershwin, Herbert, Kern, Porter and Rodgers, to name only a few, who composed vocal music of broad appeal which was offered regularly on radio by well-trained voices of beautiful and individual quality, singing with excellent orchestras under such conductors as Damrosch, Goldman, Sousa, Toscanini, Wallenstein, Whiteman and others.

Contrasting such programs with today's commercial TV offerings, we find that a new application of Greshams' Law seems to prevail, i.e. bad singing drives out good singing. In the relentless competition for maximum audience ratings, commercial TV seems determined to find the lowest common denominator of public taste, ignoring the millions of viewers who have somewhat different preferences.

As a result we are offered an endless succession of singers, speaking, cooing, or belting their way through songs in which dynamic variety is eliminated

and energy is substituted for vocal and musical quality.

Meanwhile, the art of training singers has made great strides. The American Academy of Teachers of Singing has striven over the years to encourage the elevation of the level of proficiency among American singers to the highest standards. Tone production, musicianship, interpretive and technical skills and all the subtleties of nuance have been explored, examined and refined to a notable degree. We are proud that singers turned out in American voice studios, music schools, and conservatories have gained recognition in the first ranks of achievement. On the concert and operatic platforms of the world our singers rate with the best. Their record is impressive and undeniable.

Yet commercial TV, with so many hours of programming to fill, and a dismal record of program selection, continues to overlook the opportunity to add variety to its schedules by presenting a reasonable amount of good vocal music. Are we to believe that there is no significant public which enjoys the sound of a healthy, well-used voice singing music which makes use of its expressive potential rather than limiting it? Are we to believe that the public would rather hear actors and dancers (or even voiceless composers) sing, than hear trained singers? The enthusiastic audience response to operas broadcast and telecast live from the stages of the Metropolitan and

New York City Operas does not bear this out.

We recognize that commercial television is primarily in pursuit of money. We realize that it exists to sell products. We are also aware that it is first and foremost a visual medium.

Nevertheless, the American Academy of Teachers of Singing, an organization dedicated to the upholding and promotion of the art of singing, challenges the belief that healthy singing of high quality is not viable as program material. It is distressed by the failure of commercial TV to provide a reasonable proportion of good vocal music. It is concerned about the effect of the incessant parade of destructive vocal techniques on young ears and young musical ideals. And it objects to the penny-pinching disregard for musical values which forces Public Television to turn to simulcasting because of the unacceptable audio systems found in virtually all television sets.

We, the members of the AMERICAN ACADEMY OF TEACHERS OF SINGING, commend Public Television for its remarkable achievements in providing fine vocal music to the public, despite the need to simulcast. We protest the prevailing lack of quality in the singing on commercial television and urge all those who love the art of singing to join in this protest by complaining to stations, networks and sponsors who offer poor programs and by encouraging those who offer good ones.

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