

## Letters to the Editor

To the Editor:

Re: Volume 12, Issue 3, November 2000

In her review of the English translation of Michele Girardi's *Puccini: His International Art*, Alessandra Campana prefaces her citation of my 1997 *Notes* review of the original Italian edition (1995) as follows:

"Some have lamented the lack of an analytical system in Girardi's treatment of the music, but it might be argued that this kind of life-and-works survey does not aim at providing 'analysis' of the music (at least not in the Anglo-American sense of the word), nor does it aim at satisfying the 'hard-core' needs of music theorists." (p. 263)

She then quotes the following extract (n. 11):

"The more compelling issue is Girardi's analytical method, which is at best unrigorous, at worst confusing . . . Music theorists will criticize the lack of discipline. Girardi's presentation of large structures, in particular, shows little consistency in its approach from work to work."

The ellipses in this extract, one of which is not shown, alter the sense of what I wrote. The passage in full reads:

"The more compelling issue is Girardi's analytical method, which is at best unrigorous, at worst confusing. Sophisticated readers will find it far too descriptive, lengthy and labyrinthine, while the average opera lover will undoubtedly skip over these (many) pages. Music theorists will criticize the lack of discipline. Girardi's presentation of large structures, in particular, shows little consistency in its approach from work to work, and is presented in an unnecessarily complicated format."

Nowhere in my review do I advocate that Girardi's approach to Puccini's music should follow some (unidentified) analytical orthodoxy or "satisfy the needs of 'hard-core' music theorists" from a putative "Anglo-American" stable.

I express an opinion similar to that of the complete passage, cited above, in my recent *Music and Letters* (November 2001, p. 660) review of the English-language edition of Girardi's book, but in language less vulnerable to alteration.

HELEN GREENWALD  
*New England Conservatory*  
March 2002

To the Editor:

Re: Volume 12, Issue 3, November 2000

In her review of Michele Girardi's *Puccini: His International Art*, Alessandra Campana describes me as "a card-carrying theorist of the Anglo-American 'school'". *Magari!* I was trained as a musicologist, and have been a member of both the Royal Musical Association and the American Musicological Society for many years, but have nothing beyond informal training in theory; nor do I belong either to the (Anglo) Society for Music Analysis or to the (American) Society for Music Theory. And, as Campana's reading of my study of *La bohème* all too plainly reveals, my concluding remarks lack the conviction that true theorists would bring to bear on their subject.

In claiming more for me, Campana is perhaps thinking of my interests in translating and interpreting the writings of a famous Austrian theorist, and of the role I played not so long ago in infecting the Italian peninsula with the Schenker virus in a series of lectures and seminars on the rudiments of voice-leading analysis. These led to the publication a few years later of *Analisi schenkeriana*, an introductory textbook of which I am one of the authors. So perhaps I deserve honorary membership in the Italian "school" of theory?

WILLIAM DRABKIN  
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March 2002

Campana's response:

To the Editor:

Helen Greenwald claims that in quoting an excerpt from one of her reviews of Girardi's book I altered the sense of her words. A glance at the circumstances, however, will reveal that I did not. I appended in a footnote the excerpt from her review in order to illustrate the point at issue, i.e., the possibility of seeing the book's "analytical method" as wanting. The passages omitted were not relevant to the issue at hand; as I was reviewing Girardi's book and not Greenwald's review of it, I saw no need to quote them. Moreover, I do not believe that the omissions alter the sense of her words about the issue of rigor and consistency of the analytical method.

Greenwald also reads too much into my statement when she claims that I make her the advocate of Anglo-American analytical orthodoxies. My statement simply means that a life-and-works survey might not need to be rigorous and consistent in its analytical method, and that the word “analysis” might imply different practices in different contexts. Again, I was not commenting on Greenwald’s approach or critical stance, but making a point about the book under review.

As for William Drabkin, when I admiringly referred to him as an “auctoritas” on matters of music analysis (in the Anglo-American sense of the word), I was thinking not only of his

epoch-making seminars in Rome and of the book he confesses to having co-authored, but also of the articles he has written for *Music Analysis* (he has been in its editorial board since 1982), of his Schenker translations, of the book he co-wrote entitled *Analysis*, and so on (for the full list see his website: [www.soton.ac.uk/~wmd/](http://www.soton.ac.uk/~wmd/)). Perhaps he would prefer to be called in Italian “un analista” but I am afraid that, despite his influence on the peninsula, that still means something else.

ALESSANDRA CAMPANA  
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March 2002