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## LETTER TO THE EDITOR

From Michael Graubart

May I make a small contribution to the commemoration of David Drew in the April issue of *Tempo*? And add a tribute to the present Editor of that excellent Journal as well?

I do not regard myself primarily as a writer (I remember Florence Foster Jenkins's remark: 'People may say I can't sing, but no one can ever say I didn't sing!'), but whatever writing ability I have dates from a doubly terrifying session in the *Tempo* office above the Boosey & Hawkes shop after I had submitted the first two of my three articles on Leopold Spinner. Doubly, because my poor text and I were subjected to a word-by-word grilling not just by David Drew, but by Calum MacDonald as well. Between them, they literally taught me how to write in that session; and did so *sotto voce*, because Spinner himself was working in an office just above us and would have put a stop to the whole enterprise if he had overheard the conversation.

Much more recently, after a review of mine had appeared in *Tempo*, I received out of the blue an e-mail from David (who was no longer Editor of the journal), complimenting me in extraordinarily kind words on the review: a real example of his altruistic generosity.

As for Spinner, the following is, I suspect, an alternative version of Regina Busch's remark about Katharina Wolpe and the dynamics in Spinner's Piano Concerto; at any rate Katharina herself told me this story. She was to give the British première of the concerto in a live BBC studio broadcast, with a section of the ECO con-

ducted by John Carewe. Spinner himself was at the rehearsal immediately before the broadcast. Carewe gave the downbeat for the first chord and Spinner leapt up, saying 'No, mezzo-forte!' The players tried again, a little louder, and Spinner again interrupted with 'No, mezzo-forte!' They tried a third time, still louder, and this time Spinner cried 'No, *mezzo-forte*, not *forte*!' Admonished and subdued, they played a few more notes, and at once something similar happened. The time of the broadcast was looming and it became apparent that the whole piece could not be rehearsed at that rate; the whole situation must have been ominously reminiscent of Webern rehearsing the première of Berg's violin concerto in Barcelona.

Somehow Spinner was persuaded to let the rehearsal proceed without continual interruptions and the broadcast took place – going reasonably well, according to Katharina Wolpe. Afterwards, she was standing in the green room and Spinner came in. She smiled at him and held out her hand. He came up, shook her hand and said 'Don't apologize!'

There are two morals to this story. The musical one is that the phrase-structure as well as the character of Spinner's music, like Webern's, is crucially dependent on an exact and sensitive response to dynamic markings; and the banal one is that one rehearsal for a concert including a work like Spinner's piano concerto is not enough.

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