

November 27, 2000

Dear Deborah,

I am happy to contribute a letter of support for your documentary on the work of Edvin Szamosi. It seems to me that the qualities of the *libero canto* school of singing, and the story of its evolution to date, will be an extremely interesting and timely subject for a documentary. *Libero canto* is a potentially revolutionary new path for the art of singing, and I believe that singers and musicians will be intrigued and excited to learn of it.

Many people in the music world sense that the art of singing in the latter part of the twentieth century has departed, for better or worse, from the principles and sensibilities that governed it before the Second World War. There has been a tendency for singing to become heavier, more labored, and more strained. Many factors have contributed to this development, but the change in the quality and sensibility of singing in the past few decades is beyond doubt; the consensus is that there has been a loss of ease, spontaneity and intimacy in this art. Singers now often appear to be striving for a tight control and a cosmetic perfection in their sound, but they rarely exhibit the effortless mastery that is based on the freedom from constraint—on confidence that the spontaneous, natural functioning of one's own body and mind, in response to a musical impulse, is enough.

The *libero canto* school returns us to a nearly lost tradition in terms of its musical ideals, but it is very much of the future in its practical methods and in its pedagogic understanding.

Edvin Szamosi's practical understanding of physiology and his uncanny intuition about physiological and emotional processes allow him to work with an extraordinary degree of precision and subtlety. He is able, with great gentleness and humor, to help singers emancipate themselves from habits of mind, body or emotion that have confined their singing. In this process, there is often an enormous release of physical and emotional energy. At times, it is as if the singer were suddenly freed from bondage and enabled to sing with the unsullied naturalness of his own original creative impulse. It is a moving and inspiring experience to witness this process, which is not only a liberation of the singer as such, but of the person. Film is truly the ideal medium to convey the intimacy and the drama of this work to a larger public.

People outside of the professional music world tend to have access only to the end-product of our work—the performance; yet there is enormous curiosity about the process of music-making, about the question of *how* singers achieve musical artistry. Your film on Mr. Szamosi's extraordinary work as a teacher of singing will, I think, awaken great interest among the music-loving public, as well as among musicians and teachers of music. I very much look forward to seeing the documentary when it is complete.

Best wishes,

Marianne Lockwood

President and Executive Director, Orchestra of St. Luke's