



Franco Corelli and a Revolution in Singing: Fifty-Four Tenors Spanning 200 Years, vol. 1

Stefan Zucker

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Franco Corelli and Stefan Zucker, in edited transcripts of thirteen years of conversations on the radio, in their theater presentations and master classes and in private, discuss changes in tenor singing: Beginning in the 1820s Donzelli and Duprez sang with a massive darkened tone at the expense of vocal inflections and agility. Their coarser, more obvious but more exciting style won out over the more nuanced singing that had prevailed until then. Stefan critiques Donzelli, Rubini, Nourrit, Duprez, de Reszke, Tamagno and De Lucia, and together Franco and Stefan discuss Caruso, Pertile, Martinelli, Schipa, Gigli, Lauri-Volpi, Björling, Ferruccio Tagliavini, Tucker, Del Monaco, Di Stefano, Domingo, Pavarotti and Carreras. A central question for tenors is whether or not to "cover" their tones (explained in the book). Verdi extensively coached Tamagno who didn't cover, but Verdi tenors from Caruso through Domingo do, resulting in a very different sound. Franco describes how, using Arturo Melocchi's controversial lowered-larynx technique, he and Del Monaco revolted against sweet tenor singing in favor of older-sounding tones and a more "virile" approach. Franco explains that he tried to combine Del Monaco's fortissimo, Lauri-Volpi's high notes, Pertile's passion, Fleta's diminuendo and Gigli's caress. He describes using more portamento than his predecessors, his copying of some of Pertile's interpretations and his attempt to emulate Schipa's Werther. Stefan describes Franco's music-driven interpretations and Di Stefano's word driven ones, the history of vibrato, Gigli's two kinds of chiaroscuro, chiaroscuro of dynamics and chiaroscuro of timbre. The volumes are printed on top-quality paper and feature more than 350 rare lithographs and photographs, the majority provided by the Met Archives. This is not a biography, nor is it a book of anecdotes. Instead it explains the evolution of tenor singing from 1820 to Domingo.

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