



Julie Muller

# Max van Egmond

BARITONE

WITH AN APPENDIX "SOME REFLECTIONS ON SINGING"  
BY MAX VAN EGMOND

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## Preface

In 1985 I translated this book from the Dutch and slightly modified it for a non-Dutch audience, explaining some of our weirder customs.

I haven't changed anything, but have kept adding short updates and a second discography following the original one near the end of the book and just after Max van Egmond's 1984 appendix, which I have also translated.

The debt I owe Max van Egmond himself and just about everybody mentioned should be obvious. Thanks again, dear friends and family.

Julie Muller, Amsterdam, August 2016.

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's-Hertogenbosch, The Netherlands.  
The Casino, Saturday afternoon, August 29, 1959

The first day of the preliminaries for the sixth International Vocal Competition was about to begin. Twenty-nine basses and baritones were competing, seven of whom were Dutch. They were still anonymous to the Dutch members of the jury at this stage, all but Max van Egmond. His voice was familiar to every Dutch family with a radio: "This is the news" But Max was unknown to foreign jury members, he knew. To Julius Patzak, for example. There he was, sitting at his table in the front aisle. Aside from the jury the large hall was empty, barring a secretary or two. Not very inspiring. Still, Max tried to imagine he was just giving a recital. He wasn't nervous, or so he said, because he had carefully refrained from listening to the other participants.

He was trying to keep the competition atmosphere, the non-artistic element, out of sight and hearing. He didn't want comparisons, he wanted to display his own specific gifts as fully as possible. He tried to imagine he was just giving a recital. The familiar accompanists, his schoolmates Jan Wijn and John van't Hoff and Bach chorus pianist Thom Bollen had been replaced by the competition accompanist George van Renesse. Instead of being in one of the churches or halls of Het Gooi, where there were always friends and relations to exchange a glance with, here he was in this huge, overheated concert hall.

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Max and five other basses and baritones reached the semi-finals. Out of one hundred and four participants, seventeen had come this far. But none of the Dutch competitors got to the finals, to the great disappointment of the press which admitted to the high standard of the singing. Two basses reached the finals and the first prize went to thirty-three year old Swiss Arthur Loosli. Not one of the tenors won anything, but the Dutch Music Society offered an award for great promise. The *Toonkunst* prize, five hundred guilders, went to Max van Egmond. Although it was not a first, it got him enough publicity to launch his career in The Netherlands. A local paper came out with a banner headline: TOONKUNST PRIZE FOR HILVERSUM'S MAX VAN EGMOND. He was showered with congratulations and, better yet, offers to perform. Now he would really give up being a sociology student and working for the radio news. All his doubts and hesitations were gone. He was going to be a singer. Max van Egmond was twenty-three.

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's-Hertogenbosch, The Netherlands.  
The Casino, Monday afternoon, September 1, 1980

The third preliminary round of the twenty-seventh International Vocal Competition is about to begin. Among the basses and baritones, whose turn it is today, is Thomas Durer, who is not Dutch. Thomas graduated from a conservatory in his native country and then took a summer course. For three weeks he attended master classes given by the famous Dutch baritone Max van Egmond, who thought he showed promise. Thomas worked and saved up for a year and then came to Amsterdam where he studied with van Egmond at the Sweelinck Conservatory. Now Thomas wants to try his luck in 's-Hertogenbosch.

Max is on the jury but he is not allowed to judge his own students or even former ones. That is in the regulations. They used to have trouble with that in 's-Hertogenbosch. Thomas would like to have audited the competition before entering, as the public is welcome from the semi-finals on, but at this time last year he had not yet arrived. However, Max had told him all about it and they sent him complete documentation. Still, Thomas is very nervous. He has an accompanist he has been working with for months, someone Max recommended, and that has been going very well, so Thomas has no need of a competition pianist. Last Thursday they ran through the program for some friends and Max, just back from his first full week's vacation in years, came to listen. He brought his stereo tape deck so the young men could hear their performance again afterwards. He also took lots of notes.

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For the preliminaries, Thomas has to sing an oratorio aria, an opera aria and a Lied. But if he reaches the semi-finals, there will have to be something in his repertoire from “Style Period III”, contemporary composers of whom he has been given a list, starting with Absil and ending with B.A. Zimmermann. He will have to sing twelve works, preferably from memory. Luckily Thomas has a capacious memory; he also has a lovely voice. He and his accompanist walk onto the stage and nod in the direction of the jury, chaired by the Belgian tenor Lode Devos. There he is, sitting at his table in the front aisle. And there are Erna Spoorenberg, Alexander Young, Mady Mesplé and Max. He can’t give any marks, but he can be there and he winks encouragement at his student. Aside from the jury the large hall is empty, barring a secretary or two. Not very inspiring. Still, Thomas tries to imagine he is just giving a recital, the way Max advised him to. He stands there in the overheated concert hall between two artificial-looking potted palms and sings the obligatory oratorio aria, opera aria and Lied.

On August 30, 1980, the first day of the preliminaries, Max van Egmond leaves his Amsterdam home for ’s-Hertogenbosch, where he will be for eight days. Working hours for the jury members are long, about twelve hours a day. For this (the job is considered an honorary one) they get a little under two thousand guilders, out of which the Dutch members have to pay all their expenses. As usual in the arts, the subsidy is inadequate. The competition first took place in 1954. A foundation for the promotion of music in the town had been started in the preceding year when the city’s Royal Men’s Chorus celebrated its centenary. Originally the vocal competition was meant for singers from the Benelux countries but after only one year it was so popular they made it international in scope and the number of participants rose to over a hundred. Municipal, provincial and national subsidies were available from the start and the local business community helped too, but rising costs and economic decline make the

competition's future uncertain now in 1980. Ton de Laat, who is responsible for organising the competition, has written columns on the subject in the press and the public is urged to make donations.

Rooms were reserved for the jury at a first-class hotel on the Parade, but Max decided to combine thrift with pleasure and stay with his sister in neighboring Son. However, during the months between his decision and the competition, he sold his car and by the time he found out that the distance could not easily be bridged by public transport, all the hotel rooms in the vicinity were taken. Max had picked a small inn from the phone book and reserved a room. The taxi driver who takes him there from the station says he is only willing to go because it is broad daylight; he wouldn't go near the place at night, although it is only a ten-minute walk from the Casino. The room turns out to be reasonably large and spotlessly clean. Max will find out later that the café closes early and that he is the only lodger. Max's landlady spoils him with delicious snacks, whereas the members of the jury staying at the expensive hotel are confronted even at breakfast with pallid participants. The situation is typical: Max might have planned it this way.

He leaves his shockingly heavy Samsonite case in his room and takes the score of Handel's *Belshazzar* out of his briefcase. He will have to work on it, as the performance in Utrecht immediately follows the competition. His unanswered correspondence (some of it still unopened) goes into the briefcase too and Max heads for the Casino; he is always behind on his letter-writing, the result of all that traveling. He carries some letters everywhere he goes, just in case he has half an hour to spare. His friends receive notes headed "Kulas Recital Hall", "Westerkerk", "St. Peterkirche".

Beautifully dressed in a lightweight American jacket and wearing summery white shoes he enters the Casino and is greeted cordially by Elisabeth Coymans. Max relaxes – he is expected.

The Casino Theater on the Parade is in a combined theater and movie house (showing *Don Giovanni* this week and *Fame* the next, very appropriate). The building is supposed to be modernistic. It stands at right angles to the cathedral, with which it has no affinity whatsoever. It is equally at odds with the houses in between, most of which were built in the eighteenth century. Another source of irritation is that the Parade has been turned into a parking lot. Right now there are no parked cars, but there is a fair going on, which is not too pleasant for nervous participants who have to thread their way to the Casino among the barrel organs, merry-go-rounds with screeching sirens and people announcing events through loudspeakers. Luckily the noise does not penetrate to the concert hall.

The curtains and other theater trappings usually found in this hall are removed each year for the vocal competition and an acoustic back wall made of painted multiplex is installed. It works like a sounding board. The sound reverberates in such a way that both the audience and the singer can hear perfectly. The wall was devised by an acoustical engineer the last time alterations were made.

There is a grand piano on the stage. A row of potted palms and bushes has been placed in such a manner that the singer can hide behind them if he gets frightened, according to Max. He is satisfied with the acoustics, which he approved last year when he went to the finals, but not with the temperature. "I almost fainted from the heat on the balcony" he tells fellow jury member Alexander Young. All the equipment needed for air-conditioning was installed during the alterations, except the unit itself; there wasn't enough money.

The entrance to the theater is a large foyer containing tables and chairs with a buffet at the back. For this event, the front part has been more or less partitioned off by white lattice-work screens for the secretariat. The screens have large photographs on them of all the past prize winners, with captions giving dates, names

and prizes to go with the happy faces. The march of time can be seen in changing hair and clothing styles; the joy on the youthful faces is perennial.

In the partitioned-off area there is a counter at which the administrative staff are at work. They have boxes of filing cards, with every participant's data and these are checked on arrival. The staff, wearing large I.D. badges, help each person find the right times and places and if necessary give him or her the address of a family hosting the competition. Many families in the town are willing to take participants in, to help reduce costs. Schedules for rehearsals and use of practice rooms are consulted and constantly brought up to date. It all makes a reliable impression and, what is equally important, the staff manage to create a friendly, safe environment in spite of the inevitably tense atmosphere. Each of the participants is given a recording, made two years ago on the occasion of the twenty-fifth competition.

Young people from City Hall are working behind the scenes. Some of them have been at it for months, all having been released from duties by the city to make the competition possible. Ton de Laet, who is coordinating the work, has seen Max come in and greets him. As they drink their coffee, more and more members of the jury arrive. Large sheets of paper are tacked to the inside of the lattice-work: SOPRANOS; ALTOS/MEZZOS; COUNTERTENORS; TENORS; BASSES/BARITONES; the "survivors' " names will be filled in after every round; right now the sheets are blank. The jury will begin with the sopranos immediately after their first meeting at one o'clock. There are fifty-two of them. In total, one hundred and five candidates from twenty-two countries will be competing.

The area behind the screens is filling up. Max and Erna Spoorenberg are representing The Netherlands on the jury, the soprano Mady Mesplé has come from France. The musicologist on the jury is Emilio Nuñez from Spain and the conductor is Miklós

Lukacs, a Hungarian. Alexander Young from Britain, is a tenor, like the Belgian Lode Devos who is in the chair. The German alto Hertha Töpfer was also invited to be on the jury, but she is ill.

Members of the secretariat are rushing back and forth, introducing jury members to each other, handing out papers. The competition folder is on every table; it is black with blue staves. Later in the week the same folder will be on sale for the semi-finals and finals but by then the names and programs of the (semi)finalists will have been inserted. A number of brochures is on exhibit about other competitions within the Fédération des Concours Internationaux de Musique, with which the 's-Hertogenbosch competition has been affiliated since 1959. This month there are vocal competitions in Munich and Geneva and competitions for conductors, for flute, piano, organ, trumpet and many other instruments as well. The majority of these events seem to take place in May/June or August/September, but there is always something going on for those with the time, the money and the will.

The big difference between this foyer and most other reception areas is the lack of smoke. A member of the secretariat tells us that they used to offer cigarettes, but not any more. There are, however, little glass bowls on every table and the contents really show you where you are: licorice, Vicks pastilles and all kinds of throat tablets.

The jury members, who are only just beginning to get acquainted (except those who are old friends) are invited by the secretariat to come and be photographed. Uneasily, a little embarrassed, they follow the man past the tables outside the screened-off area, where heated "exam faces" are bent over scores instead of the more usual learned volumes. The almost tangible tension doesn't go very well with the girls' evening dresses.

The public will have to climb a staircase to enter the amphitheater but the jury has its own entrance to the front of the hall and the stage. There is a broad gangway behind the first six rows

of seats and it has been enlarged by the removal of one row. The tables for the jury have been set up there with the chairs facing the stage. Those chairs had better be comfortable, because the members of the jury will be spending about ten hours a day sitting in them. There is a name board on each table, including one for the coordinator, Ton de Laat. The two rows of seats behind the jury are reserved for members of the board; the front seats will remain unoccupied until the finals on the last day. For the present, the public is not admitted so that the participants' carefully preserved anonymity is insured. Candidates can be disqualified after the preliminaries without the whole world knowing about it – no candidate is named before the semifinals.



*The 1980 jury.*

The jury has arrived on stage and been piloted behind the sounding board; this is where the photograph is to be taken. Everyone has to stand under the spotlights, in front of a neutral backdrop. Board member Elisabeth Cooymans starts to laugh as she sees the group milling uneasily. She says something reassuring in English, hoping to make at least the English-

speaking members of the jury relax and she succeeds as far as Max and Alexander Young are concerned – they begin to grin. The photographs don't turn out very well, though, too stiffly posed. Then the jury is taken to the hall and up in the elevator to the jury room on the fourth floor. After this one trip in the elevator, Max will stick to the stairs for the rest of the week; it is about the only physical exercise he'll have time for.

The members of the jury, Frans van de Ven, the chairman of the foundation, and Ton de Laat all sit down at a huge round table. Everyone is given a large file and the recording made for the twenty-fifth competition, which the participants also received.

Now come the instructions to the jury. It is twenty past one.

Although van de Ven announces that German will be the lingua franca, as most of the members of the jury understand it, Max is asked to translate into English for Alexander Young. Lode Devos, who is going to instruct the jury, will translate his own German into sotto voce French for Mady Mesplé. Van de Ven's introductory words are aimed at the unusually large number of new members of the jury, four out of seven. He tells them they will have to work hard (a hundred and five participants) and welcomes one and all.

Then it is Lode Devos's turn. He begins explaining the regulations, first saying that the jury has practically never disagreed, but when it has, the reason was always that the regulations were being misinterpreted.

Devos compares the jury's deliberations to a conclave. The discussions will take place in three stages, like the competition, during and after the preliminaries, the semifinals and the finals. One first prize can be given for each type of voice and one second prize (in very exceptional cases there may be a tie) and honorable mentions may be awarded. The jury also has to award a great number of special prizes, including one for countertenors (if there are any competing); a prize from the Catholic Broadcasting System, from the Socialist Broadcasting System, from the foundation for contemporary Dutch music, the

BUMA, the prize from the Friends of Art Song for the best rendition of an art song by a Dutch contestant (this consists in an invitation to give three recitals, organised by “The Friends”); the Janine Micheau prize for French repertoire; the Dutch Music Society prize for vocalists, a grant for a Dutch contestant who deserves special encouragement (won by Max in 1959) and the prize of the City of ’s-Hertogenbosch, the biggest one of all. The jury will have plenty to do.

During the preliminaries, the contestants will be judged in two ways. Each member of the jury has a list of names on which to award marks, immediately following or even during the singing; a spontaneous reaction ranging from one to ten points. As usual in The Netherlands, each point is described by an adjective. Mme. Mesplé, reading the list, remarks that the description has not been properly translated into French, as the adjective describing the seven is less favorable than the one qualifying the six. Ton de Laat requests the jury to look at numerical descriptions rather than linguistic ones; it should be obvious what they mean. After a certain number of contestants has been heard, there is a short meeting for which de Laat has devised an ingenious checking system: while the jury is working, the secretariat collects all the marks and adds them up. Then the conclave decides which participants can be admitted to the semifinals. There are three possibilities, corresponding to three colored cards with which each jury member is now issued: red means stop, yellow means a discussion and green means go on. The cards, which have been in use for years, are a little faded, but their meaning is clear. If the number of points collected by a participant does not correspond to the decision taken here, the secretariat can indicate the fact. That in itself will not affect the decision, but may lead to further consideration and perhaps to a fuller report. For instance, if a candidate has too few points because he or she was indisposed but the jury wants to hear the voice again, there are no problems. However, if a candidate has a

lot of points but is nevertheless rejected, this demands careful wording. Candidates who are disqualified are entitled to discuss the reason for their lack of success with a member of the jury. In order to go straight on to the next round, a candidate needs four green cards; if there are three, a discussion follows. The members of the jury have to get used to the system. Devos' explanation is repeated in several languages and eventually everyone understands.

Then we enter a danger zone. When their own students are discussed, the jury members have to bow out. That is not very nice, says Devos, but prevents unpleasant tension. You cannot be present during the meeting either and this rule pertains to past and present students. Everyone understands that the rule is a good one. An extremely long and anxious discussion follows on the question of who is an ex-student. Somebody who left years ago? Yes. What about people who have been taught by two jury members? What if you were a substitute teacher? I have a friend I sometimes subbed for ... What if you know a candidate's wife? It's a matter of honor, says Devos after a while; we are leaving it up to your own conscience.

Is there a maximum number?, somebody asks. No, answers van de Ven; everyone who deserves to, gets through. Too many finalists has never been a problem. All the prizes need not be awarded, either. Then they look at the system of rotation for the preliminaries, which gives jury members time off to recover. The new members are advised to use care in awarding points until they have some idea of the general level. Time must be found for the jury members to talk to participants not admitted to the semifinals. Devos makes a remark about comforting young ladies, to which he gets no reaction. Erna Spoorenberg, who has been a member of the jury for several years, points out that even during the preliminaries, you have to be on the lookout for candidates for the special prizes, as these are not necessarily awarded to finalists. Max suggests that it may be better not to take the colored cards downstairs, to which the others agree with

loud laughter – imagine! “That wouldn’t be allowed”, de Laat announces. Then we have lunch and go down. It is almost two o’clock and the first soprano is waiting.

Thomas’s experiences as a participant turn out to be very different from Max’s in 1959. After a little trouble, he managed to get a practice room for a while earlier in the day, as only fifteen minutes are allowed for warming up just before it is his turn. This takes place in a small windowless room in the basement, which has enormous velvet curtains that absorb all sound. The piano turns out to be a spinet and after a few minutes, Thomas and his accompanist decide they cannot work like this. But as they had the other practice room before, Thomas is sufficiently warmed up. He says later that the whole thing seemed like some kind of dream. There weren’t many people around; once in a while he heard a singer practicing in the distance. When he went on stage, all he saw was a dark, empty hall. The jury members were seated at their tables and it was completely quiet. He was concentrating so hard that he had noticed the bushes and other greenery only because he had known it was going to be there from seeing it on closed-circuit television in the foyer. “When the chairman thanked me, I almost fell over.” Thomas says. “That’s how quiet and unreal it all seemed”.

Thomas had read downstairs that the number of sopranos (fifteen out of fifty-one) and tenors (two out of five) admitted to the semifinals was so small, he would have to exert himself to the utmost to get through. That was a little discouraging but, after a pep talk from Max, he was convinced he could do a good job and show the jury what he was capable of. He is not dissatisfied and his pianist played much better than at the last rehearsals. They are not good enough yet, though. When the list of basses and baritones is published, late that evening, Thomas is not among the semifinalists. Max is understandably disappointed, but satisfied with the quality of his student’s work. Better luck next time.

Jury duty, which is from eleven a.m. to eleven p.m. during the preliminaries, is exhausting. There is hardly any time for Max, who has to sing in Handel's *Belshazzar* forty-eight hours after the prizes have been awarded, to practice. Of course he has time off occasionally, but the meetings go on even during meals and the minute a member of the jury shows his face, he or she is converged upon by rejected candidates, all of whom are formally entitled to speak with one jury member at an appointed time, but naturally try to engage any official they see in conversation. Max is not the type to avoid such confrontations. During an interval later in the week he talks to Anne Tedards, a thirty-two year old American soprano who was eliminated during the semifinals. She has done a lot of performing; she worked with New York Pro Musica Antiqua in 1973 and is singing at the Klagenfurt Stadtstheater in Germany this year. Leafing through his formidable sheaf of notes, Max informs her that he is only allowed to convey his personal impression of her work, not the results of the deliberations. He has some trouble finding this candidate among his notes because, as it turns out, he had an hour off while she was singing in the preliminaries and so only heard her during the semifinals, which is disappointing to her. She tells him that last year she was taking soubrette parts in an opera company and had no time at all for recitals. This year she is taking guest parts, mainly in Germany. Max says it is hardly possible to do this before you have had a contract. "But Germany is hard for Americans anyway", says Anne. "You have to be able to speak the language fluently." She breaks off, because Max has found his notes. "Hmmm..". He starts by summing up the points in her favor, like any good teacher. "Breathing technique was good, that was clear from the long notes in *Pi  Jesu*. The intonation may be a little on the sharp side". "Yes", says Anne, "I'm always on the sharp side". "But not much", Max adds. "The trill in Bach was good, so was the high C". Anne is glad he heard that – a remark which makes him

blink. “It’s over so soon”, she explains and Max admits that Bach doesn’t give the singer much time. The coloratura could be a little more flexible, just a bit more acrobatic and slightly faster too, in the aria; that would have impressed him even more. The singer explains that she chose a tempo she believed the trumpet could handle. “If it goes too fast, the trumpet can’t keep up.” Max considers this a realistic approach. “Still, the coloratura could have been more exciting, if there had been more emphasis.” To the surprise of the people at neighboring tables, he illustrates. “The humming in the Villa-Lobos was very good”, he says. “Could you hear all of it?” “Yes, all of it”. Anne is pleased; the singer can never tell. Max continues: “Diction, style, I don’t know too much about that, for this composer; other colleagues may be better judges”.

“I gave you a nine for expression” “A nine?” “Yes, the mark. Nine out of ten. That’s the way we mark in Holland.” “Oh,” says Anne, relieved. “That’s good then.” “Style and comprehension were quite good too and so was your pronunciation of Latin and German. It was very clear and I liked your delivery. On the whole I was surprised there was so little support for my viewpoint. It may be a good idea to ask some other jury members for their opinions, you’ll learn more from criticism.”

She thanks him and leaves soon, as there is someone else standing behind her chair, bursting to talk to Max. The intermission will be over in another ten minutes; there’s not even enough time to run up and down the staircase. While Max is still talking to his next interpellator in fluent German about her technique, we hear the chimes. The jury has to reconvene.

On Wednesday, his day off, Max goes to Amsterdam. At home he stuffs even more unopened letters into his briefcase, which is still full of last week’s mail. He consults with his agent, Ariëtte Drost, on the subject of his next tour abroad, spends the afternoon teaching and travels back to ‘s-Hertogenbosch. The semi-finals begin on Thursday. Now that the public is admitted, the

atmosphere is a little more festive, although of course the tension is rising.

Journalists come to listen, the Catholic Broadcasting System is making a recording. After the competition the finalists will be allowed to sing on the radio; right now, members of the board, visitors and Max, representing the jury, are to be interviewed. Max, being a Baroque specialist, is asked what his opinion on countertenors is. This type of voice arouses peculiar emotions in some people. A member of the audience being interviewed has just announced that "it makes me feel sick". Max talks about his experience with countertenors, having taught several, and says he is very glad that they are permitted to compete in 's-Hertogenbosch, "probably the only vocal competition where this is possible." He would be even more enthusiastic if the counters were allowed a little more freedom of repertoire choice because romantic Lieder, for instance, do not belong in their repertoire at all. The reporter also wants to know what he thinks of the piano accompaniment and Max is glad to be asked. He has already suggested that a harpsichord be permitted next year for the accompaniment of early music, and a lute if possible. But he can understand that entire ensembles are just not feasible because tuning and changing the stage would take up too much time. As far as the harpsichord is concerned, they would need one with a transposing keyboard, as for authentic performance practice it would have to be tuned to four fifteens, about a semitone lower than the four hundred and forty cycles per second now in standard use. This makes quite a difference to a countertenor. On the last day of the competition, Saturday September 6, the atmosphere is very different from the preceding days. Even though the public was admitted on Thursday and Friday, there were not very many people. It was a big change for the performers, having the hall half full instead of entirely empty, but on Saturday the air is charged. By eleven a.m. it is clear that anyone who wants to find a seat will have to hurry. The hall is filling up. The public is even allowed to sit in the rows of seats between the

jury and the stage. The singers will do much better than during the semifinals, too. According to Max, not one of them achieved as much there as in the preliminaries, but the finalists are sure to be in better voice again today.

My car is in the Parade parking lot, ready to go the minute the prizes are awarded; Max has to rehearse recitatives in Utrecht tonight for *Belshazzar*, which is to be performed on Monday. He has exchanged the past few days' casual clothes for a trim brown suit, worn with a salmon-colored shirt, a brown tie and oxfords. The other members of the jury are also dressed for the occasion. Between eleven and five-thirty, the sixteen finalists – who will all be given a certificate, whatever else they win – sing the music they have selected themselves for this last round. They also sing works chosen by the jury from each finalist's preferred category. The applause reflects the preference of the discriminating audience, as foundation chairman Frans van de Ven will later emphasize in his closing speech. Yesterday, when a light bulb exploded during Ann Hetherington's performance, people hardly reacted and she too continued as if nothing had occurred. One short moment of sympathy and then everyone's attention was back on the music.

After the last singer's performance the jury retires, as is customary. The results should be in by about seven p.m. To pass the time, the management of the Casino has organised a piano recital by Margerie Few and Nina Perry. Whoever doesn't want food or a walk around 's-Hertogenbosch on this sunny Saturday can come and listen to Schubert and Stravinsky. There are not many takers, but the idea was a good one. Towards the end of the piano arrangement of *Petroushka* the hall starts to fill up again. And when the two instrumentalists have left and the jury is still not back at ten past seven, there are signs of impatience; a few people start to clap. Someone announces that the jury has not finished yet and would we please be forbearing.

By half past seven the jury is ready. The tables have disappeared, all except a couple that have been put on the stage next to a kind

of platform. Masses of certificates and medals are placed on the tables and then we get a seemingly endless round of acknowledgements: the organisers, the secretariat, the accompanists (one of whom, Gerard van Blerk, was already doing this work when Max won the Toonkunst prize and is celebrating his twenty-fifth season here today), the broadcasting companies that covered the competition and so on. All these people thoroughly deserve to be thanked, but the poor finalists are getting restive. They have been at it for a week. After the compliments, still no announcement. Van de Ven starts his pleasant speech by enumerating all the special characteristics of each of the six jury members that make them so particularly suitable for this job. The last person he names is Max. "And then there is Max", he says, "Max van Egmond". Applause. Van de Ven thanks him for his work. "It was a bit confusing at the beginning, the voting I mean, because he always worked to support, to do good, to be humane". He thanks Max "for defending everybody" and the audience understands; tumultuous applause follows. Max smiles gently, outwardly unmoved.

And then the results are announced, but, as often happens, no city of 's-Hertogenbosch prize has been awarded. Plenty of tears, hugging and kissing, though. Max is the first of the jury members to congratulate the winners.

There is a banquet to come for the members of the jury, but Max has to leave. Within twenty minutes he is in the car and being driven in the direction of Utrecht. An insulated box containing cold chicken, tomatoes and a few apples is a sorry substitute for a banquet, but Max seems perfectly satisfied as he eats happily with a dish towel around his neck protecting his good suit. He is unenthusiastic about a piece of apple he accidentally put down on a cleansing tissue, though. "It tastes a bit perfumed" he remarks. Arriving in Utrecht, we have to look for the school where the rehearsal is being held. Max is a little late, but "they'll wait for me", he is sure. As it turns out, the other soloists have only just finished rehearsing. The conductor of the Utrecht Baroque

Consort, Jos van Veldhoven, is giving instructions to Rob Goorhuis, who is seated between a harpsichord and a positive organ. He will be playing both during this oratorio. The Baroque Consort has eighteen instrumentalists; two playing the Baroque oboe and two on the natural trumpet, plus a vocal group of twenty-two. Beside Max, who is singing the part of Cyrus, the soloists are Mieke van der Sluis, soprano, a student of Max's, the British countertenor Kevin Smith, the tenor Harry Geraerts, an ex-student, and the Belgian baritone Josef Baert.

Ensembles like this one, which try to come as close as possible to Baroque performance practice by using authentic instruments (or replicas) and small vocal ensembles and by approaching the music in a historically correct manner, are no longer rare in The Netherlands. Max, being the vocal Baroque specialist, is often asked to perform as a soloist with these groups which are usually composed of young musicians, for whom he adds short lectures on theory during rehearsal. A lot of Max's ex-students are members. Coincidentally, *Belshazzar* will be performed in Utrecht at the same time that the Erasmus prize for 1980 is awarded in Amsterdam to Nikolaus Harnoncourt and Gustav Leonhardt, for their invaluable contributions to the field of early music.

The rehearsal starts with some general remarks to the harpsichord player about the chords introducing the first recitative. The problem with this oratorio is that the recitatives are too long. If some kind of action isn't added, they get boring. You have to act a little. Aside from the extra attention paid to the recitatives, someone will also be manning the lights during this performance. Several spotlights are to be positioned so they can focus attention on the orchestra, soloists and chorus at appropriate moments. During the *mene mene, tekkel* they will project the Writing on the Wall. The soloists are not going to remain in the same place all evening, as is customary during oratorios. They move back, closer to the orchestra, when they are not singing. Jos tells the harpsichordist that the orchestra has to play louder. Then a certain passage is repeated three, four times. They talk

about pronunciation and especially about emphasis. Max tells us that early Handel oratorios are very difficult, because the composer did not know the language very well when he first went to England. He would sometimes put the emphasis on the wrong syllable, particularly in difficult biblical names. This makes them hard to sing. "Euphrates", for example. Max tries it in several ways and eventually he is satisfied. Everybody leafs through the piles of paper again, as the score is a bad photocopy on which the numbering is sometimes missing, which makes it hard to find the right place. After half an hour's rehearsal a man suddenly enters, announcing that the school is about to close. The musicians had thought they had at least another half hour.

There is only time for one more recitative, then all the people and the harpsichord have to go. The instrument is loaded onto a van as though it were all in a day's work, which happens to be the case. The musicians decide to start an hour earlier tomorrow, Sunday, to catch up. One o'clock. Then they can get something done before the dress rehearsal at two-thirty. That will be in the Vredenburg Music Center where Monday's performance will take place. Max gets back into the car and is home by eleven-thirty p.m. He hasn't been there since he left after giving a few lessons on Wednesday afternoon and is welcomed back. He talks a little about his impressions of the last few days in 's-Hertogenbosch but is soon ready for bed. He wants to do some more work on Cyrus before rehearsing in Utrecht tomorrow and he needs his sleep.

Sunday at one, Max and his score are back in Utrecht, now in the Vredenburg Music Center. It is a beautiful, sunny Sunday and just for a moment the car almost headed for the beach at Zandvoort of its own volition. But Utrecht won. Sadly, the Music Center is not just indoors, it is drafty and cold too. At one point all the chorus members are wearing coats and scarves and the soloists keep moving their chairs around in an attempt to find a spot the draft cannot reach.

Max utilizes every moment Cyrus is not singing to catch up on his correspondence. He sits on his chair with the music on a stand in front of him. The chair is surrounded by little piles of paper: private correspondence, bills, invitations, magazines, waste paper. Everyone skirts them carefully. Max appears to be fully engrossed in his correspondence, but just before he has to sing he stops writing, carefully puts away pen and paper and gets up, picking up his score as Cyrus' introduction begins. He times this perfectly, poker-faced, giving onlookers the impression that the timing is purely coincidental and registering incomprehension at their grins. Max loves to act.

The musicians rehearse until about six and then have dinner together. When they leave the Music Center everyone suddenly remembers what beautiful weather it is. The walk to the restaurant and back after the meal is far too short and then it's back to work until almost midnight. We had absentmindedly parked the car in the Vredenburg garage and pulled a ticket with the time stamped on it out of a machine. Now, many hours later, we have to go down the concrete staircase, which reeks of urine, to find an entirely different apparatus which is supposed to swallow our card and register what we have to pay, a novel device. It actually works and by pooling all available coins (luckily Mieke, Harry and Kevin came along) we manage to collect enough money to make the machine disgorge a metal disk. Then we rush off to find the car, because the metal disk will only release it for the next fifteen minutes. There it is! It even starts right away and we race to the exit across the empty parking spaces. The disk is inserted, the barrier goes up and so does the car – we take the ramp on two wheels. At the top we find Mieke, Kevin and Harry who salute the car with a thundering “Halleluya” and we laugh so hard we nearly drive into the wrong street. Now for Amsterdam.

Monday morning at eight, Max is practicing again. He has already done his sit-ups and taken a cold shower. He does not

have much time now; he has to teach from nine to eleven and from two till six this afternoon. The performance starts at eight. It is a good one, even the *Utrechts Nieuwsblad* is enthusiastic about it the next day. The audience is obviously very pleased, too bad there are not more people. On the other hand, now nobody had to sit behind the singers in the theater-in-the-round conceived by the well-known contemporary Dutch architect Herman Herzberger. It works well for instrumental performances, but Kevin Smith says it makes him feel like a bullfighter in the ring when the public is breathing down his neck. Not tonight, though.

The oratorio, written in 1745, is about the heathen king of Babylon who is unwilling to curb his own dissipations and the riotous living of his people, in spite of warnings and prophecies. His scandalous behavior is constantly censured by the Jews, who are in exile in Babylon at the time. The Book of Daniel is the main source for the story and the prophet (sung by the counter-tenor Kevin Smith) is one of the main characters. He explains the Writing on the Wall (*Mene, mene, tekel upharsin*), which is projected on the wall in this performance.

Several other stage effects have been devised to create a little atmosphere for the audience, like a wickerwork cradle, which one of the soloists almost falls over. The reason for these efforts at visual support lies in the length of the oratorio: almost three hours, although in this performance almost half an hour has been cut.

Harry Geraerts makes a really nasty character of the evil Belshazzar and Max plays Cyrus with obvious pleasure; he is the noble Persian who vanquishes Belshazzar and frees the Jews. Originally Handel wrote the part of Cyrus for a mezzo-soprano, but even in his own time a baritone sometimes sang it. Nitocris, Belshazzar's mother and a follower of Daniel, is sung by Mieke van der Sluis who will take her final examination at the Sweelinck Conservatory in a few months' time.

The members of the Consort's excellent chorus sing as Jews, licentious Babylonians and warlike Medes and Persians; they have to be versatile. They all work together perfectly, including the instrumentalists, who share the same musical director. The only discordant sounds are, occasionally, produced by the brass. Playing authentic wind instruments is extremely difficult because they have no valves. They are also highly sensitive to changes in temperature and humidity. Max learned long ago that you have to make allowances for the brass when working with Baroque ensembles, even if the players are world famous. Something often goes wrong.

This performance is no exception. In general, it is very good indeed. Chorus, orchestra and soloists offer the audience a wonderful evening of Handel. Max and his students sing some breathtaking coloraturas, but during Cyrus' final aria the notorious Baroque trumpets play horribly off-key. "Destructive war, thy limits know, here tyrant Death, thy terrors end". Max sings on imperturbably. Then Nitocris kneels before him and he promises to be a son to her. Daniel detracts from Cyrus' virtues by announcing that it was all foretold by the Lord and the chorus affirms this: "The Lord is king". Cyrus promises to make the rest of the prophecy come true. He will rebuild Jerusalem – the Lord be praised. A magnificent paean sung by the chorus with the soloists joining in marks the end of *Belshazzar*. Amen, Amen. The audience applauds wildly. Everybody is highly enthusiastic. The Utrecht Baroque Consort's many months of hard work are rewarded. Jos van Veldhoven is radiant and the Consort's business manager Jan Goedhart looks pleased. The members of the orchestra and chorus are enjoying the acclaim; the soloists are given flowers and everyone is happy.

Max has to hurry to the Amsterdam train. He has lessons to prepare for tomorrow and he is off to Sweden on Wednesday.

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## Semarang, Dutch East Indies



*Juliana hospital, February 4<sup>th</sup> 1936*

A European district of an Asian city. The sunny days of early childhood, spent in a climate at body temperature. The letters to Holland with snapshots of babies: first Eddy, then almost four years later Max, born on February 1, 1936. Maxje at four days old – the Juliana hospital. Maxje at three months, lying on a table. “Oh, what fun” it says on the back. The crinkles of laughter around the tiny nose are recognizably Max’s. Maxje: sometimes on papa’s arm, but usually on mama’s. His first teeth – a radiant smile, his eyes already screwed up a little nearsightedly. Maxje and Eddy, who soon goes to kindergarten – a different world.



*Father and son, February 4<sup>th</sup> 1936*



*Max 11½ month old.*

His first steps, taken at six months and then a little later, his first pair of sandals. Shoes – aren't they pretty! Max in a sailor suit, posed for the photographer; his hair neatly combed and plastered down, with a part so straight it might have been made with a ruler. A solemn moment.

*Semarang.* The perfect temperature in the suburb, high above the inner city. Shorts and a shirt – cold and real heat, both unknown. Only the cooler water, scooped straight out of the *mandi-bak* and poured over his body with the *gayong*. The tub in the bathroom and the cool water.

Sunlight in the living room. On his stomach on the carpet with his cars. The carpet is a little scratchy. The stripes on it are roads for his vehicles – the parking lot is under the sofa, where they stand neatly in a row. Lying flat on his stomach he can get as close as he likes. He can see the cars perfectly.

The real car: on his knees in the back, looking out through the rear window. The clouds of dust the tires raise are the most important thing in all his drawings. Up they go, into the mountains. On vacation. It's cool there. A scratchy sweater over his bare arms – a funny feeling. Beside the mosquito netting, he has a real blanket on his bed – it presses down on him, but protects him. The tub of bath water put on the fire to heat. Later he is allowed to get all the way in. A hot bath: sheer joy.

*Semarang.* Going with mama, seeing what she does. In the front of the house they speak Dutch, with mama and papa; in the back they speak Malay with Cook and *Babu*.

Playing in the garden with his wheelbarrow – the back garden, the side garden, the front garden past the drive – by the street.

In the Kopenlaan, on his own. Playing house with the nice little girl from down the street – that's fun.

Papa's office in the city. The building is very tall; it has several floors!

At the neighbors: Aunt Ina and the van Pernises. They can both sing. He has a gorgeous bass, she knows lots of nursery songs. Max goes every day to listen, fascinated. He is allowed to sit on her lap. Mrs. van Pernis sings with him, for him. She teaches him songs and he sings along. He sings on key, clearly, purely. It is very beautiful. He is only three when they notice: the neighbors, his parents. Mama used to play the piano when she was a girl.

Papa played the violin. They are quite musical, but they have not got the time; there is a family to take care of. But Maxje has such a lovely voice...

"I have a sister, I have a sister" Maxje sings. He will be six in two weeks. The beds in the Juliana Hospital are made of white metal. Mama has lots of flowers. The new baby sister has curls, damply plastered to her head. After two sons, a daughter! Helpful friends and neighbors bring what the baby girl will need: dolls. She can't do a thing with them, but Max takes them under his wing. He



*Semarang, 1941: first grade.*

bustles around after mama with his family. Whatever she does for Nelleke, he imitates. His babies are washed, powdered, diapered and fed, with the greatest of care. "A perfect little mother." Everyone is pleased.

Down the street the neighbors daughters start a Sunday school. Max does not go to church but he does go to Sunday school. He decided he would because they sing there. One of the Bouman daughters plays the piano at the Sunday school. A van Pernis girl reads to them. Mrs. Bouman is the first grade teacher. Max is allowed to attend from the age of five and a half, unusually young. The school is a little higher up in the hills; it has only three walls – one of the long sides of each classroom is open; the children are half inside and half out. Outside Semarang there is a war on. Times are uncertain. The children should go to school while they can, people say. They take a picture of the class. A new sailor suit, bigger now. Each child is given a small Dutch flag to hold. Most of them clasp it stiffly to their bodies, but

Max, seated at the end of a row, unfolds his carefully and holds it out in front of him. You have to be able to see things well.

Maxje has been a bad boy. Teacher makes him sit way in the back, for punishment. Teacher remembers Eddy. He was always up to something. You never knew what to expect. Mama has to come to school. The principal asks her: "Is that child as fractious at home? He argues when he is sent to the back of the class and says he can't see from there!" Mama thinks it over. She is not angry. She takes Max to the doctor. Afterwards he rushes to the neighbors. "I'm so happy, I'm so happy." "What about, Maxje?" "I'm getting glasses."

In March 1942 the Japanese arrive. The school has to close at once. The Dutch people in Semarang are interned in groups. Mama was born on Java, so for the time being the van Egmonds can stay at home, all except Papa. He was in the reserves. He had taken his uniform out of the closet. Max saw boots and puttees; weapons and green-painted cars. Papa went on manouvers. At first he used to come home once in a while, but now he has gone away. Mama is sad and so is Max.

Mr. Bouman has gone too and Mr. van Leeuwen. Mrs. van Leeuwen has come to live with Mrs. Bouman, bringing all her animals. Mrs. van Leeuwen was the fourth grade teacher. Mrs. Bouman wants to go on teaching Maxje how to read and write. She had just started. Mrs. van Leeuwen wants to teach Eddy as long as she can.

Every morning the two little boys walk to Ambon Road. But it is a secret. No one is supposed to know they are learning things. The Japanese do not allow that. Mama wants to do something for the teachers in return. When life became so uncertain she passed her typing and stenography exams so she could teach those things. Then she would always be able to earn her family's living, if necessary. She teaches Theo Bouman and his sister to type. That's a secret too.

Eddy likes Mrs. van Leeuwen's animals. He has had cats and a hen. You can pat hens. They stay around you. So does Mrs. van Leeuwen's rooster. Eddy and that rooster are good friends. Some children have lapducks, which are eider ducks; they are very affectionate. Max wants nothing to do with them. He isn't very interested in animals, especially since he was bitten by a dog who did not like his squeaky bicycle and bit him very hard in the behind before Eddy could rescue him. He had to have a big bandage on the wound, with strips of adhesive tape. Then they called him "star bottom". He doesn't like dogs.

The internees have to leave most of their things, which then become the property of the Japanese. Some of them try to leave their valuable possessions with others for safe-keeping. The van Egmonds have an unfamiliar car in their garage. It is grey. Then another "visitor" arrives. Max is enchanted, convinced that it is meant for him. A piano. Mama gives him a book with notes in it. Every note has a color and the piano keys are colored too. Carefully he presses down the keys, one by one. He is playing the piano! Soon he can play the Sunday school songs from memory. Shortly afterwards the van Egmond family is interned. Cooky and *Babu* are crying at the gate as they leave.

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## Summer 1943

Barefoot, he walks along the streets of *Bangkong*. What used to be a convent in Semarang has been turned into an internment camp for European women and children. The little boy accepts this as he still accepts everything in life, without question. He used to live in a big white house; now there is one room which he shares with Mama, big brother and baby sister. Papa went away a long time ago. They went to see him just once, soon after Nelleke was born. Why his mother had put him on the back of her bicycle, with the baby in front and Eddy riding next to them all the way to the airport on his scooter, he didn't know. He had said a friendly hello to his father; it was Eddy who was especially fond of him. The new baby sister got most of papa's attention in the big field where all those women and children had gathered to speak to the men. Eddy had looked around him, wide-eyed, impressed. But then Eddy was already nine.

Soon after that, everyday life stopped and so did school. They stayed home another year, but everything was different. All sorts of things were forbidden; you could not even talk about learning to read. People went away suddenly. You had to be polite to the Japanese soldiers, very polite. Otherwise awful things could happen. You had to do exactly what you were told. Exactly. He had done his lessons, been obedient and had been allowed to play on the piano, his brand new friend. But one day he was sent away. With Mama, Eddy and Nelleke. To *Bangkong*. Still, now he has a Task. He walks past all the houses and raises his clear treble: "First *han* – food's ready!" and rings the big beautiful dinner bell the Japanese have given him. "Second *han* - food's ready!"

The little boy walks alone in the hot sun. He looks serious. His face, very Dutch, with its almost ash-blond hair and blue eyes, is far too young for the new glasses. “Professor” they call him now, not “slant-eyes” the way they used to.

He is the child who walks alone; the quiet one who will not play rough ball games or climb trees. But he spreads the word – as he will do later on the radio news and later still in the many cantatas he is to sing. “*Hört!*” “*Erwachtet!*” “*Kommt!*” “Third *han* – food’s ready!” He rings his bell. Max van Egmond is seven years old.

He must not go through the gate. Nobody is allowed to go out through the gate, which seems so mysterious to him, attracts him in such a funny way. The bigger children just go on living their lives. They play outside, are taught secretly as much as possible, from the schoolbooks smuggled into camp. They have to work too, hard work. There are lots of chores to be done. But Max does not have to yet. He does not play outside much either. He stays with Mama and the baby. He does not like ball games. He cannot see the fast balls coming, cannot judge the distance or enjoy the games. He has to be good and very obedient. Bow to the Japanese soldiers. If Maxje isn’t good, mama will be punished.

When a woman is punished, the whole camp has to assemble, to watch. The children are supposed to stand in front of their mothers, who sometimes manage to shield their little ones from the sight.

If a mama is disobedient, she is punished too. They hit her or hurt her with cigarette butts; tie her up for hours in the burning hot sun. Maxje once saw that from a distance, a woman tied up in the sun.

The woman next door is acting funny. She stands in the sun for hours too. She is not tied up, but she just stands there, in the garden and does not move. It is all very creepy.

After a year and a half in *Bangkong*, they all go to *Soitipok Lama*. That is a suburb of Semarang, now an internment camp. They have much less space here – they have to share their room with other mothers and children. Everyone has his own bunk – they try to maintain some privacy by curtaining them off. “May I play in your house?” Sometimes there are arguments. That frightens Max. Eventually they are transferred to another district. *Halmahera* they call it. More and more people, less and less space. There is less to put in it too. Things that break cannot be replaced. Clothes that no longer fit are altered. The children wear pieces of wood tied on with thongs instead of shoes or sandals. They are not very pretty. Later they go barefoot. The mothers pool their resources and cook whatever they can find to eat, – it is not much, but it is shared. The water has to be boiled too. Everything made of wood is used for kindling. Many people get sick.

Four families to a room, about sixteen families to a house. The plumbing gets clogged up. The women have to dig rows of emergency latrines at strategic places around the camp. Max sees dirty, reeking holes in the ground. They are surrounded by stones to stand or squat on and separated by rattan partitions for privacy. To prevent dysentery, the holes have to be emptied regularly – this is the hardest “chore”.

The camp is surrounded by matting: “*gedek*”. There are two fences, with a passage filled with barbed wire in between. There are patrols. Sometimes a cook or *babu* manages to smuggle something in to a former *nonya*: food, a piece of cloth, news from outside about a husband or grown son. In secrecy they listen to a hidden radio.

Once in a great while a postcard comes, or they are permitted to send one. The messages are prewritten and you can choose one: “We are all fine”.

In *Halmahera* the biggest blow falls: Eddy, now almost twelve, is taken away. All the boys over ten suddenly have to go. At first no one knows where they will be taken. No one knows if they

will ever be seen again. Mama is sad. Max has to take care of her. That is his duty. He is scared.

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## August 1945

In *Halmahera* people know that the war is finally over. Airplanes with a red-white-and-blue flag on their sides have flown over the camp which means that their long awaited liberation has finally come. The internees' frenzied, hysterical joy is indescribable.

Max sees people dancing in the streets, jumping up and down, screaming and crying, embracing one another.

Suddenly no one bothers about the Japanese soldiers any more and they stand around a little helplessly at a distance. Then they try to become as inconspicuous as possible. Soon they leave; the gate is opened, the people are allowed out. In a *bedjah* Mama, Max and Nelleke drive the few kilometers which have separated them from Eddy all this time. Mama takes Eddy away from *Bangkong*, a camp mainly for old men and boys. Papa, like the other fathers, had been a reserve non-commissioned officer and went to a prisoner-of-war camp at the beginning of the war.

For a year, Eddy had worked in the fields with the other boys. They could eat what they cultivated in the burning hot sun, and so could the other internees. Growing things was hard work in the burning sun, much too hard for a boy. Who works in the sun in the middle of the day? No one in his right mind. But in camp they had to. There was never enough to eat, certainly not for a growing boy. Eddy got tall, also skinnier and skinnier. Towards the end he could not work any more and the soldiers allowed him to lie quietly on his mat. The camp was liberated just in time for Eddy. When the *bedjah* from *Halmahera* arrived in *Bangkong*, Mama and Max found a living skeleton. "Another two weeks would have killed him," the doctor said. First diluted milk, then full-fat. Then cereal, slowly adding things till he had gone from baby food to regular meals for the second time. Eddy recovered quite fast but Mama was tired.

A boarding house in Semarang. The *bersiap*, chaotic times. There were no Dutch authorities but the Japanese were there. The sons and daughters of the future Republic of Indonesia were hiding in the *dessas*, their villages. They were determined that the colonial regime was not to return. The newly-liberated Dutch women and children were protected by South Moluccans, operating on their own. These soldiers were loyal to the House of Orange and did what they saw as their duty. The defenseless women and children were guarded day and night by considerate Moluccans. When an attack on the city was launched from the *dessas*, the same Moluccans burned down the native villages. Every person there was put to death.

In their boarding house, the van Egmonds waited to be reunited with Papa. He was already in Batavia and they had to wait their turn. After an uprising in the jail, during which several Japanese guards were killed, reprisal followed on the native population. The boarding house stood at a bend in the road which was swept by machine gun fire from both sides. The women and children hid under the beds while the bullets came through the windows. Then a Japanese officer and his men came in to take the owner of the boarding house away. The women took his part; he had nothing to do with the uprising, he had been inside all day, they said. The crowd of people arguing on the subject got bigger and bigger. The curious van Egmond boys were right in front. Inconspicuously, the Japanese officer slid something into Eddy's hand. Later, when he had left, without the boarding house owner, Eddy looked to see what it was. A heavy gold ring, a man's ring with a green stone. It must have belonged to a village elder. Outside lay the dead and wounded. The street was red with blood. Max does not remember.

Waiting for a seat in an airplane. Three-year-old Nelleke, who needs constant attention, Eddy, hardly recovered, Max and Mama. She is tired, she gets sick; a carbuncle at the back of her neck. The wearing war years take their toll: she cannot throw off

the infection. At first Eddy can take care of her, but she gets worse, runs a high fever and the doctor decides to have her hospitalized. The three children are sent to an orphanage, a former Cartini school in the hills.

Now comes the most difficult time in Max's life. His mother, whose favorite he is, who he has had to help and support for so long without realising how much he needs her too, is gone. He is not allowed to visit her; the priest who runs the orphanage considers it too dangerous. Eddy, the brother he hardly knows any more, still sick and a stranger to them, goes his own way. He was not even around while Nel was growing from a baby into a toddler.

At the overcrowded Cartini school, the older children are expected to take full charge of their little brothers and sisters. The responsibility for a three-year-old falls on the boy of nine. Nelleke doesn't like it here. Screaming and crying, she is dragged into the dining hall between her brothers. At least four hundred children are staring at her. She is in a panic. Max feeds her. He washes and dresses her, keeps an eye on her day and night. A perfect little mother.

Above all there is the pain, the consciousness that his mother does not know how they are doing – she is probably feeling the way she did when they took Eddy away. With great difficulty he finds a priest who is going in the direction of the hospital. He finds a pencil and paper and writes – very, very neatly; Mama is strict – that everything is all right. That Nel is eating and playing. That they love her and hope she will be better soon. He writes carefully, the way he was taught during those secret lessons. The priest takes his letter and later he hears that his mother has received it. He is very relieved. Now Mama doesn't have to be frightened any more. She knows he is taking care of everything.

The few weeks in the orphanage do not pass quickly. To Max and Nel they seem like months.

Mama is released from the hospital but is still far from well. She is given priority on the flight-list and the family is flown to Batavia by army Dakota. “We were allowed in the cockpit to look around, compliments of the crew,” Max remembers. “We spent the whole flight strapped down on benches, there were lots of wounded.” says Eddy. It was probably a British army flight, the soldiers were Sikhs.

In Batavia the family is reunited. Papa has learned to be a tailor in the prisoner-of-war camp and he enjoys sewing. He has managed to find a roll of khaki material somewhere and makes clothes for the entire family, like the children in *The Sound of Music*. In January 1946 they embark on the *Bloemfontein*, a troop transport. Final destination: Grandma and Grandpa in Hilversum.

The *Bloemfontein* is overcrowded. Here again there is no privacy. Even the showers and toilets are open. Max takes a shower with his mother and reassures the other women: it doesn’t matter, he can’t see a thing without his glasses anyway.

It gets colder and colder en route and at Port Said the repatriants are given warm blankets and clothes. “Presents from Holland for us” Max imagines, having no idea what the situation there is like. On February 1<sup>st</sup> 1946, on his way to the homeland he has never seen, Max celebrates his tenth birthday. There is a great deal to celebrate. He and his mother, father, sister and brother have survived the war.

Rotterdam! Sailing up the Nieuwe Waterweg the van Egmond children have been looking at the flat Dutch countryside. Max experiences the cold as an exhilarating tickle in his nose. The meadows and windmills are covered with a layer of white: snow! Eddy knows what you do with that and on debarkation he is first down the gangplank. Max’s welcome to his country of origin is a snowball in the back of the neck.

That winter they live with Grandma and Grandpa in Hilversum. Within a short time they visit all the family: van Egmonds and

Hagemans in Hilversum; the huge Koornwinder family in Rotterdam. Aunt Lena and Uncle Arie celebrate their silver wedding, Max's first big family party. There is a rented hall, a large dinner. People have made up verses and sketches about the anniversary couple; they joke and sing, laugh and cry. Max loves it.

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## 1980

From September 10 to 16, 1980, Max goes to Sweden. He is giving several recitals with the soprano Eva Nässén. She took a Baroque course with Max in Dongen in 1973 after which he invited her to sing Schumann duets with him in Vreeland and to sing on the radio. Since then he has been asked to visit Göteborg every few years in September, to sing with the ensemble “A New Ground”, of which she and her husband are members. He combines this with recordings for Radio Sweden and a short vacation in Stockholm.

His real vacation is the trip by Torline Ferry, which enables Max to spend twenty-four hours by himself, away from the phone and the mailbox. He can read and study in his cabin (or on deck if the weather is good) and use the sauna and the pool. A movie, good food, plenty of sleep – the height of luxury.

He is expected back on the evening of the sixteenth, but the ship is delayed by engine trouble and arrives in the middle of the night. Nevertheless, he has to teach all next day and decides that, in spite of his fatigue, he will attend the concert by Marilyn Horne for which he bought a ticket ages ago.

He need not have bothered to get his ticket so far ahead of time, as the fabulous American singer turns out to be so little known in the Netherlands that her recital is given in the Kleine Zaal, the small auditorium of the Amsterdam Concertgebouw. “It was too small really,” says Max when he arrives home beaming at eleven thirty. “That huge voice almost blasts you out of the hall. It was wonderful.”

The next day, Thursday, he teaches in the morning and then goes to Antwerp in Belgium (only an hour and a half away) where he is to sing two cantatas with the *Musici Academici* for the Bach

Festival. He comes home on Saturday and by a miracle he has Sunday off. That is very lucky because September 22 is an important birthday in Max's circle.

He says this about his friends:

“What it boils down to is that I am lucky enough to have a small but loyal circle of very good friends. There are also times during which a friendship becomes a more intimate relationship. The interesting thing is that most of my friends are in another age group. Only one family is of my own generation. I also communicate regularly with a few women friends in their seventies and even over eighty (but very youthful in mind). Most of my true friends are quite a lot younger, however: a few other musicians, teachers, an artist, a few academics and some ex-students who have kept our relationship warm and always keep in touch. Almost all my friendships have been established through music, several of them abroad. One thing is certain: I never feel lonely or solitary. On the contrary, I am constantly uneasily aware that I cannot manage to find enough time to devote to friends, to a partner, but also to myself.”

This Sunday is spent preparing for Jehan-François' birthday. Everything in the living room will have to be moved and put someplace else. Company is coming and the house must be turned inside out, made spotless. Then there is wining and dining, pleasant conversation, mostly about music. Everyone goes home early because the next day is a working day and Max wants to go to bed on time. When your body is your instrument, you have to take extra good care of it.

On October 1 Max goes to Enschede. He is to give a house concert for the Friends of Art Song. The aim of this society, which Max has chaired since 1976, is to promote the art of Lieder singing in The Netherlands. One of the ways in which the members do this is by organizing house concerts at which an

established singer (often a famous one) performs Lieder with a younger colleague. The society holds auditions for young singers every year and also awards a special prize at the vocal competition in 's-Hertogenbosch.

The Friends of Art Song, has about seventeen hundred members and is divided into chapters, each of which has its own organizer who manages the local concerts. All the work is done by volunteers.

This year Max is giving a number of recitals with a young soprano called Wendela Bronsgeest. They are accompanied in Enschede by the pianist Thom Bollen, an old friend of Max's. Thom is not only active in the society as an accompanist, he is also the organizer for Amsterdam and concerts are often given at his home.

Max returns home late from Enschede. The next day he is called to the phone during a lesson: his colleague Leandro Lopez has suddenly fallen ill – can Max substitute for him tonight at a performance of *Dido and Aeneas* in Brussels? Yes, he can. It is then twelve noon. Max explains rapidly why he is leaving his student in the lurch, asks the janitor to explain to the others why he has to go and rushes away.

He catches a two o'clock train to Brussels, arriving three hours later, just in time for a last minute rehearsal. That takes till seven and in the meantime the costume is altered for him. At seven he has to start changing, as the make-up with a beard and a wig will take time; at eight the curtain goes up. Max writes: "I am always glad of the opportunity to sing opera, which I do about once a year. That is, I do one production with several performances. It adds a completely different dimension to singing, and enriches the interpretative possibilities. Circumstances in The Netherlands and the opportunities in my younger days steered me predominantly into the field of concert singing. I am perfectly content with that, but I think every singer should work in opera occasionally, for versatility and for the fun of it."

*Dido and Aeneas* was written by Henry Purcell in 1689. [Recent research suggests an earlier date and a court performance. JM 2010] The short opera, composed for English boarding school girls, is set at the time when Aeneas was shipwrecked off the Carthaginian coast. Queen Dido falls in love with him at first sight, but he thinks the gods order him to abandon her.

The first time Max sang the part of Aeneas it was also October, but the year was 1971. That was fairly early in the period of increased interest in the Baroque which we are still enjoying (1982). At that time a concert performance was given in the Geertekerk in Utrecht, a church which often hosts Baroque music performances, with the Choir Catholic Utrecht. Marius van Altena was one of the other singers; he and Max work together quite often. The harpsichordist was Frans de Ruiter, the later director of the Holland Festival.

In the intervening nine years Max has sung the part a number of times. One of these was during the Castle Hill Festival in Ipswich, Massachusetts, where he has taught a summer course for the past few years. That was last August, so he still has the text memorized. That performance was a “real” one – with costumes and sets. So is tonight’s and van Egmond, who just loves dressing up, boards the train to Brussels happily. The friends arriving later from Amsterdam to see the performance have to bring a camera to photograph him in full costume: for publicity. The Baroque ensemble is directed by lutanist Joel Cohen, the conductor of the Boston Camerata and the chorus is the Opera Studio. The part of Dido is sung by the American Leona Gordon, the sorceress is Maria Ventura, who was a finalist at ‘s-Hertogenbosch recently.

When Max arrives at the Theatre de la Monnaie, the principal Brussels music theater, he is told that the opera is to be supplemented by madrigals and lute music. *Dido and Aeneas* is too short. In Ipswich, the problem was solved by playing some appropriate Purcell as an introduction and then having the

Prologue to the opera declaimed. For a non-English-speaking audience that won't work.

The additional songs are set in a play introducing a play: a rich duchess in Elizabethan England is receiving company. A young woman has a quarrel with her lover and feels unhappy. She sings "Stay, Time, Await thy Flying" by Dowland. The company tries to cheer her up by singing a happy song and her lover (Aeneas) begs her forgiveness. He sings the ambiguous song "Come Again", but she rejects him and he consoles himself with the duchess. Then the guests sing a number of appropriate songs, one of which is the fairly vulgar ballad "When Dido was the Carthage Queen". They leave and the young woman and her girlfriend remain behind. She sees the resemblance between her fate and Dido's. Now if she had been Dido... that's where the opera starts.

Max knows the Dowland song "Come Again", which he is to sing solo, but several of the madrigals are new to him so he needs a few hours of concentrated rehearsing. Apart from refreshing his knowledge of the text, most of which he has done on the train, he also has to learn all the moves, the feeling and size of the stage, its exits. He has to take direction from Tom Hawkes on the latter's interpretation of the part and get used to the lighting. Then the costume belonging to the much fatter Leandro Lopez is altered and the beard is stuck to his face with spirit gum. After the recital and the late night, it is all a bit tiring. He will try and get some rest towards the end of the afternoon, otherwise his voice will not be in perfect shape by performance time.

Towards eight p.m. everything and everybody is ready. The opera begins almost on time and the auditorium is filled to capacity. This is the fourth of five performances.

When Max sings "Come Again" he has the audience eating out of his hand. This is about the only time during the evening he can act cheerful. Then he has to turn into weak, hesitant Aeneas. That works too. Wearing the brown velvet suit that is a shade too big for him (the costumes are from Purcell's times, not classical



Brussels 1980: Aeneas in Purcell's *Dido and Aeneas*,

Troy), Max plays the shipwrecked and confused Aeneas. He doesn't quite know what is happening to him, but Dido knows exactly what she wants: him. If that's what she wants... he falls in love. But the gods are jealous of their happiness (in this version of the story, by Nahum Tate, witches disturb the idyll) and command Aeneas to take ship once more – he has to go found Rome. Poor Aeneas is torn by doubts but obeys Jupiter and leaves, in spite of Dido's tears and reproaches. She is going to die.

The classical drama, mangled into a tear-jerker by Tate (who did the same to Shakespeare's *King Lear*) concludes with Dido's superb dirge. Purcell's music, beautifully played and sung, has once again vanquished the action. The audience is enthusiastic. When the public has left, Max comes back onto the set for a few pictures. Then he hurries off to remove the itchy beard with methylated spirits.

Max, Joel Cohen and a few friends go to the neighboring Café de la Paix for a snack. Max apologizes for his "slightly scabby" appearance – the meth has not done a very good job. He and Cohen reminisce about past performances. They go through the international Baroque world: "Have you spoken to what's-her-name lately?" "Did you know that X is now conducting the Y orchestra?" "Do you remember when...?" It is all so much fun that Max forgets the time. Not until after midnight does he consult his watch. "Hey! Do you know what time it is?" Yes, everybody knows. Max decides to ride back to Amsterdam with his friends at this late hour anyway, instead of going to his Brussels hotel. He phones to cancel his room. This way at least he will be able to sleep till a reasonable hour in the morning; he has to teach again in the afternoon.

Max gets into the back of the car. He prefers riding in front, but everyone who drives him at all regularly knows that he will take the least comfortable seat, unless prevented. This time no one was able to do so. He removes the contact lenses he has had in too long today and puts on his glasses. He could have saved

himself the trouble. Within five minutes he is fast asleep and does not wake up till Utrecht. Then he is good company and tells us all about the day's adventures, eating the driver's cookies in the meantime. By three a.m. Max is standing on his own Amsterdam doorstep, a little sleepy again, searching for his key.

Max's classes at the Conservatory take up a lot of time. He teaches about sixteen hours a week. Every student has one private lesson a week and in addition there are repertoire classes during which the students, who are divided into two groups, spend one afternoon a week together under the direction of their teacher, listening to and discussing each other's repertoire of art songs, arias and recitatives. In this way everyone gets two turns a week. Max says that listening critically to the work of others and discussing it is at least as educational as singing.

He does not teach in the main building in the Bachstraat, which is too small to hold all the music students, but in one of the accommodations on the Keizersgracht, consisting of two adjacent houses, connected at the back. Next to Max's room, which has double doors to deaden the sound, somebody is playing a violin concerto. Upstairs you can hear a pianist but nobody worries about it.

Max teaches sitting at the piano when he has a single student. He or she then stands in the classic singer's position, in the curve of the grand and most students hold on to it once in a while. In this position, teacher and student can look directly at one another. Max has to see exactly how the student moves. He would like to have a mirror in his classroom as it is important that the student can see his own jaw and mouth, but shoulders, diaphragm, the student's whole posture are also important. The first person to have a lesson today is Mieke van der Sluis. She is getting ready to graduate and knows what to do without much telling. First she warms up. Scales, using all the vowels, the lip consonants for articulation. "Nimme numme, nimme numme; numme namme, numme namme." You can hear her voice

loosening up. She sounds clearer and clearer, the sounds start to “sparkle”, as Max calls it. Brilliance.

Mieke was recently examined by the throat specialist Dr. van Deinse, in the Hague. He specializes in treating singers and has instruments for measuring the voice. He can see what a person’s range ought to be and if a student is singing too high or too low. That seems to be a common occurrence among young singers. If they are going too high or low they will spoil their voices. So Mieke went to see Dr. van Deinse. He put her voice at somewhere between soprano and mezzo. She is a little unhappy about this and Max asks why. After all, classifying voices into categories is an artificial business. He mentions a number of people for whom the classification does not work. Eva Nässén, with whom he sang recently in Sweden, falls between categories. Janet Baker is a real mezzo, but has recorded quite a lot of the soprano repertoire. “Imagine,” says Max “if they decided to make only four shoe sizes. Everybody would have to cram themselves into them; we’ll do without the sizes in between.” This makes Mieke laugh, but she is not quite convinced. “What about limited repertoire?” Max answers her question with another one. “Have you ever had trouble with your soprano repertoire?” No, she hasn’t. “Well then, there are things in between: Mozart’s Cherubino for instance.” Mieke is satisfied, for the time being. She goes back to singing scales (Later she develops into a “real” soprano after all).

Max is not happy with the way she is articulating her consonants. He devises difficult phrases, most of them from her repertoire, for her to sing scales to. All the hard consonants are in them, as well as vowels difficult to produce on high notes. “Waar de blanke top der duinen”; “filia gloria”; “The trumpet shall sound”; Something very slow, for breath control. Then he tells her something about the larynx, referring to a lecture given recently at the Conservatory by an East German throat specialist. Phonetics and anatomy are also part of a singer’s “repertoire”.

After Mieke comes Josée. She is a much less advanced student, a member of the new Chorus of the Concertgebouw Orchestra. Today she is hoarse. She will have to warm up very carefully. “Sing right behind your mask,” Max says. “Make more room inside your mouth, but concentrate on the mask. Sing around your nose.”

Max shows Josée how to do everything by example. You always have to do that for beginning students. If you don’t, there is a good chance they will develop an incorrect technique and then it is very hard to get it right again. Aside from generally accepted terminology, every teacher has his or her own way of indicating sensations hard to express. How do you explain to a person what she ought to be feeling behind her nose? “Sparkles” says Max. “Bubbles”: brilliant overtones.

At the end of the hour Josée is exhausted. Max, who keeps trying to explain what he wants to hear using mime, using his hands and his voice to illustrate, could also use a little rest. There is coffee downstairs in the cafeteria.

When teaching, Max doesn’t seem to make much use of the theory of phonetics, a subject he knows a great deal about. The students do that in methodology class, he says. He knows from experience that students have to feel the differences in sounds while singing, in their chests, bellies, foreheads. “An interior voyage of self-discovery” he calls it. “I seem to use more physiology than most of my colleagues dare to. For example, in the presence of a colleague I told a young singer (not one of our students) ‘lower your tongue a little’. My colleague objected – considered the suggestion to ‘make more room’ sufficient. But students differ. ‘Room’ works for one, another one says ‘Oh, is my tongue too high? Why didn’t you say so?’ ”

Max starts as usual, zooming on the *m* and the *n*, followed by vowels, preferably alternating narrow and wide ones. Then, an immediate connection with reality: the words, the text of the piece. All kinds of fantasy phrases, some thought up on the spur of the moment, some used for years. They must be in all the

languages used for singing, to use the vowels in context. Consonants can be a great help if the placement is right, in the front. If they are too far back or too weakly enunciated they are a hindrance rather than a help.

“A singer can realize fifty percent of his delivery by the way he pronounces his consonants,” Max says. “For example: ‘Es ist so weich’ – you can allow the *w* to zoom as much as you like. Or ‘Ich bin im wut’ – the same *w* is much more explosive there. And that is an advantage a singer has over a violinist or a flautist: they have no consonants.”



*Marjan Smit and Max van Egmond*

The next student is Marjan Smit. She has just recovered from laryngitis and Max gives her some very easy exercises. Marjan came to the Conservatory wanting to study with Max. When she started her preparatory year he was already “fully booked” so she took lessons from someone else. Towards the end of the last term she asked Max if she could audition; she did not want to be

late again. She has been his student now for three years. Next year the faculty will decide which diploma she may work for: performance or teaching.

Marjan has a nice voice but at first she lacked self-confidence. As both a cause and a result, she did not pay enough attention to her appearance. Max, who like all teachers has to help with the non-musical problems of his students too, introduced her to a fashion editor of a women's magazine and her husband, a fashion designer. They took Marjan in hand, taught her a more attractive hair style; her teeth were fixed. Marjan lost a lot of weight. The transformation was photographed and appeared in the magazine *Viva*. Marjan is not ashamed of having been helped to do something about her appearance. Marjanne Kweksilber, Max's ex-student who sometimes substitutes for him at the Conservatory when he is abroad for long periods, also stimulated the metamorphosis.

Marjan Smit has become a self-confident, chic young lady with dancing dark eyes and a radiant smile. Max regards her as one of his most promising students.

In the afternoon there is a group lesson. Max first discusses a plan he has of inviting Cora Canne Meyer to lecture to his women students on chest register. Other people interested are also welcome. The students are enthusiastic about the project. Then Mieke sings. She hardly had any time to look at the Bach cantata she was supposed to prepare, the reason being that she was suddenly asked to sing an oratorio. She prefers to use her time during the group lesson for her part in it, but the hardest thing is a duet. "Oh, David will help," says Max nonchalantly. The young American is willing. He did a couple of summer courses with Max at BPI, the Baroque Performance Institute in Oberlin, Ohio, and is studying with him at the Conservatory this year as a post-graduate. He can sight-read so well that he sings the duet without preparation. They are accompanied by Emil Kyzer, who is always there for Max's group lessons. Apart from the permanent accompanist, the students are encouraged to bring

their own; the people they work with outside classes. Max likes his students to try various accompanists: a lute or a wind instrument makes a nice change. He would also like to have a harpsichord for Baroque music, but the room is too small. When Mieke turns out to have some time left after her duet has been discussed, Max asks her to sing the Bach cantata without having prepared it. Afterwards he has some remarks to make about her ornamentation. He refers to the book by Johann Joachim Quantz, written in 1752 and translated into English as *On Playing the Flute*. You have to be very careful with ornaments, seeing to it that they belong to the same period as the music. A late-Italian ornament in an early German song is just as anachronistic as a telephone in a movie about Henry VIII. Then Max criticizes Mieke's pronunciation. As Quantz says, "the professional musician (must) seek to play each piece distinctly, and with such expression that it becomes intelligible to both the learned and the unlearned, and hence may please them both."

After a tiring day of classes Max rides his bike home. He lives in a seventeenth-century house in the Nieuwe Looiersstraat, which was formerly split into an upstairs and a downstairs apartment. So he has two flights of stairs and two front doors, one of which he has had nailed shut. The way the house is built is quite convenient, because Max often has guests. Musicians do a lot of traveling and Max stays with colleagues regularly. He likes to be able to ask them to visit when they are performing in Amsterdam. Not only is hotel life unpleasant, it is also expensive. World-famous singers command high fees but air travel, hotels, restaurant meals and concert clothing are no small expenditure. Tax laws in The Netherlands are not very satisfactory either. Deductable expenses must be individually verifiable, so you have to save every single bill. In the best years you earn enough to classify for unbelievably high income tax brackets, particularly if unmarried. Being "only" an artist and not

classified as “self-employed”, Max can’t deduct part of his profits as a provision for his old age either. Then he would have to manage on social security. The fact that most singers cannot really keep giving concert after concert until they are sixty-five is of no possible interest to the tax collector. That is why Max, like most of his colleagues, is attached to a conservatory. Not that he does not enjoy teaching, but he has too many students. His friends keep after him to cut down because, after a day like this one, he looks very tired. He thinks that is too risky though; he is a man who likes security. What if tomorrow everyone suddenly stops asking him to give concerts? It doesn’t seem likely but the usual subsidies are harder to come by and that all musicians will have less work is a lot more probable now in 1982 than seemed possible ten years ago.

Max used to have private students; there were advantages and disadvantages to that. At a conservatory you are confronted with examination requirements, schedules, meetings and these hamper your work. On the other hand, there are colleagues who can be very stimulating. You can have ensembles, there are lectures and concerts: there is plenty of equipment like video recorders for the benefit of the students. You can also do an exchange, like the one with Cora Canne Meyer coming up. She is going to lecture on chest register and has invited Max to share his insights on Baroque music with her class. She too considers it important that the students work with various teachers and acquire knowledge of different concepts of music.

The main reason for teaching at a Dutch conservatory rather than privately is the pension. All teachers at official institutions are civil servants and qualify for the national civil service pension fund. They get much more than the national pension on retirement, but of course they have paid for it out of their salaries, unless they qualify for a disability pension at a fairly early age. Security is another advantage of a teaching post. You do not realize what all the other benefits and drawbacks are until

you have started work. Max likes it at the Sweelinck, but by six p.m. he does not mind going home.

On arrival he enters through the basement door. Fast. He happens to have guests who enjoy prowling the streets. Omar and Ramses are of Siamese extraction. Omar is a little bigger and quieter, Ramses is a small seal-point with directions for use; he does not like contemporary music.

The presence of these gentlemen necessitates putting a brick on the garbage can and one in front of the refrigerator. They are always hungry. They spend part of the night rolling sealed cans of cat food around the floor, hoping they will open. They do not bother Max; he puts ear plugs in his ears and sleeps through anything. He has not owned this house very long and apart from the kitchen every room has had several functions. If he sleeps downstairs, students have to go through his bedroom. If he sleeps upstairs he has to keep climbing two flights of stairs. Guest room downstairs? Too far from the bathroom, which is now on the second floor. It used to be in the basement, but then nobody can sleep there. Each floor has a front and a back room but if he puts walls between them they are both too small – especially as he wants to furnish them with a harpsichord or a piano. A seventeenth-century house is fun but there are problems. The stairs are very steep too, especially the back stairs. Max sometimes falls down them.

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1946

Max and Eddy's first school in The Netherlands was in the Sumatralaan in Hilversum. Max should have been in fourth grade by then and at first repatriated children were put into the class they belonged in according to age and not scholastic level. After all, it was not their fault they were behind; they had been punished enough by circumstances. This line of reasoning cost Max and many other children dear. The youngsters who came back from German concentration camps and those who had gone underground were often also placed far in advance of their real level. For the children who had been to school in the colonies there was the additional problem that some subjects had been taught in an entirely different way. On top of the long school days, from nine to noon and from two to four p.m. the children had remedial lessons.

Max and Eddy did not stay at the Hilversum school long; their father went back to work for his company, Blom and Van der Aa, and they moved to Bloemendaal, near Haarlem. Max finished third grade there.

The company wanted Ko van Egmond to return to the Dutch East Indies, as it was still called, but he did not want to go. He accepted a post with a parquetry factory in Veendam, near Groningen, some two hundred kilometers away. He worked there all week and spent the weekends with his family. He traveled back and forth until the summer vacation and then the family moved to Veendam.

They remained there from the summer of 1946 till the summer of 1948. The continuity in their lives was relative; during the first couple of summer vacation they went to Baarn, near Hilversum, living in the home of friends who were away, and when they returned to Veendam it was to a different house.

However, Max finally spent two years at the same school, the Veendamsche Opleidingschool in the park, next to the Grote Kerk, the main church.

The children who went to this elementary school were destined for secondary school. It was called the “shoes school”, as distinguished from the “clogs school”, the public school for children who were less fortunate. Max went through fourth and fifth grade in Veendam. It was a carefree, happy period. He had friends and his family was a regular one, just like anybody else’s.

Right after the war living in a small town was convenient; everything was rationed but it was not difficult to get extra food in rural areas. The children drank milk straight from the cow and Mama would skim off the cream for Max to whip with a fork. Veendam had an old fashioned, small-town atmosphere and Max felt safe there. He loved the smell of peat-burning fireplaces in the winter. The canals (“het Diep”) had an odor all their own too; due to the potato-flour and strawboard factories. He and Eddy learned to skate on the canals.

Max had a classmate who had also been repatriated, Max Wegner. The two Maxes had their past in common. The second year, the van Egmonds lived in the Beresteynstraat, across from the Wegners. The parents became friends and spent a lot of time talking about the Indies, internment camps and the difficulties of repatriation. The Wegners were worse off than the van Egmonds who had at least been given enough winter clothes at Port Said by the Red Cross.

By the time they got to “W” for Wegner, supplies had dwindled. The Wegners went to Veendam in ill-fitting shoes, without overcoats and with only the “ten guilders to start with” in their pockets.

The adults discussed the unimaginable situation: after years of working hard, building a career and security for their families, first an internment camp and then a return to The Netherlands, bereft of all their possessions. Now they had to start over. The

children had a right to as bright a future as possible, so every penny was hoarded; thrift was the watchword. School, the more expensive one, was a necessary expenditure, even if there was no coal in the house. And for Eddy, secondary school. Even if the books were costly, that was a must. As long as the boys did their best. They had that obligation toward their parents, didn't they?

Eddy was not working very hard – he preferred to have fun, now that he could. He was a little wild too – didn't watch Nelleke very well when she was left in his care. Luckily you could count on Max for that; he always kept an eye on her.

The two Maxes went to school together and did their homework together. Max van Egmond, obsessed by the phenomenon called "radio", had set up a private communications system with his friend. When their homework was done they would check each other – talking through two tin cans with a string stretched in between, from house to house. It was somewhat inconvenient for passers-by.

“Like every other school child, I naturally had trouble getting down to work at home. I was also a slow learner and easily distracted. So I thought up gimmicks; finding something that would appeal to my imagination while I was sitting at my desk. For example: I was crazy about microphones. So I would imagine I was teaching a lesson on the radio (the lesson I was supposed to be learning). A ball of paper, hanging down from the lamp, would be the microphone and so I would make a game of the lesson. Or, another time, I would see myself chairing a meeting, hammer and all. I don't remember if it was a parliament or a court, but it was something dignified. So I would pontificate about the lesson and at the same time drum it into my unwilling head. But often, if the lessons were not done by bedtime, I would be ashamed to have my parents

find out and I would do the rest under the blankets by the light of a flashlight until my eyes closed.” Max reports.

In Veendam no one heard Max sing. He did not feel like it. Even in the Cub Scouts, where the den mother taught the boys songs, his voice did not attract special attention, although the den mother came from a family with great musical talent and knowledge. The two Maxes went to Scouts together too. Max van Egmond was not all that interested, but mama gently insisted. She was worried about his lack of social contacts and somehow managed to find the money for dues and for a uniform. Max liked the uniform. When their den mother got married, a snapshot was taken of each of her cubs. Max was a thin-faced child, wearing a pair of large, dark-rimmed glasses,



his eyes rounded at the solemn occurrence. His family calls this picture “Death Agony of an Owl”, which sounds just as funny in Dutch, but seems to be a family saying. *Max van Egmond* he signed the photo in his den mother’s wedding album. The handwriting looks a lot like his mother’s. He went to a Scout camp at Whitsun. Max enjoyed that, except that there was not much time between

the moment the revellers in his tent called it a day and the hour early birds went for their morning walk. That made him feel a little tired. When he got home and was telling Mama all about it on the sofa, he fell asleep in the middle of his own story.

Veendam boasted a flourishing music scene. World-famous orchestras and soloists came to give concerts, on the initiative of Cor Batenburg who was the director of the Veendam Oratorio Chorus. Although the van Egmonds were fond of music, they seldom went to the concerts; going out was expensive. But in

March 1948 they heard that Dora Lindeman: was to be a soloist in the *St. Matthew* Passion in the Grote Kerk. Dora Lindeman. was married to Max van Doorn, a school friend of Ko van Egmond's from Hilversum, after whom he had named his second son. Max van Doorn was a dentist by profession but had given up practicing in order to devote himself entirely to music. The van Doorns were invited to come and stay and the boys were permitted to go to the performance.

Thursday April 1 was the big day. Max knew the Grote (Dutch Reformed) Kerk very well. His school was next door in the Julianapark and he went to Sunday school there, on his mother's initiative.

The church, finished in 1662, is an uncomplicated brick structure. It holds about three hundred people and has large windows. As a result and because of the pleasant way it is situated it does not make the somber impression on children that many such churches do. It is not highly ornamented but the pulpit is extremely beautiful. The pipes of the organ, built in Germany in 1925 and later transported to Veendam, are impressive too – it is a nice church to be in. Max was particularly struck by the solemn atmosphere that Thursday after Easter. This first *St. Matthew* to be sung in Veendam was performed by the local Oratorio Chorus with the chorus from nearby Winschoten which also was directed by Cor Batenburg. Winschoten provided the first boys' choir Max had ever seen or heard.

Every one of the hard, narrow pews was filled and additional chairs had been brought in. Then they entered: the soloists Dora Lindeman, Han Lefevre who sang both the Evangelist's part and the arias from the pulpit, Laurens Bogtman who sang the Christ part, Peter de Vos, bass arias and the others. They were followed by the conductor. It became very quiet. Then the double chorus was heard: "Kommt ihr Tochter, helft mir klagen" with the interwoven boys' chorus: "O Lamm Gottes, unschuldig."

It would be fun to report that Max was a Bach freak from that moment on. In fact, he was far more interested in the ritual than in the music. It is Eddy who remembers that the Christ was sung by Laurens Bogtman, Eddy too who recalls: "It was a long time to sit still." The work cannot have been easy for the boys to follow, as the text book contained only the German words. But it can't have taken too long, as a great deal of the Passion was cut, including all the bass arias except the last: "Mache dich, mein Herze, rein."

There were two reviews, one of which was good and one bad, as usual. The negative reviewer complained that the harpsichord was too loud almost throughout (!).

In the spring of 1948 Max was twelve and in the fifth grade. He had been promoted with a six, the lowest passing mark, for every subject except conduct, for which he got a seven. He had learned good conduct in internment camp. He became more interested in his schoolwork in the fifth grade and all the sixes became sevens; he even got an eight for reading. The only subject he kept failing was French. Eddy had a lot of trouble with French too.

At that time Max enjoyed school. Beside the other Max he found a new friend and fell secretly in love with a quiet little girl who was to attend a concert of his years later when he sang in the old neighborhood in 1961. Outside school hours he played with the other boys on vacant lots. He learned to swim, along with Max Wegner and his sisters, in the Veendam outdoor pool. Icy! If the weather was good they would sometimes stay there all day, playing on the grass and in the water. He had freedom and space to move around in.

Sometimes the children would go shopping with their mother in Groningen. The steam trains in use just after the war had wooden benches and separate doors to each compartment; the conductor went from car to car across the running-boards. The light bulbs had been painted black during the war and only a

little light shone through at the bottom. On the way home in the evening Max would stare, fascinated, at the lights flashing by outside the window of the darkened train.

That same spring of 1948 his father gave up his job at the parquetry factory. Prospects there were bad and he thought the place was being badly managed. He decided not to wait for the bitter end and he and a colleague set up a small school furniture factory in Bussum, near Hilversum where the children's grandparents lived.

A lot of counting and calculating was done. Ko van Egmond wanted to earn enough to send his three children to university. He felt obligated and also wished to do so. He loved his children very much and was determined to assure their futures, but it had to be reciprocal. They had to work hard and do their best. Ko van Egmond went to Bussum, traveled back and forth, became a weekend father again. Max's six for effort became a seven. At the end of the school year the children and their mother followed their father once more. They moved to the Heemskerklaan in Naarden where they were to remain until 1960. Naarden and Bussum were once separate villages but even before the war they touched and now neighboring Hilversum had practically reached Bussum. The whole area is in what is called "Het Gooi" and as all the radio and television broadcasting companies are located there it is a media-dominated, prosperous part of the country, some thirty kilometers southeast of Amsterdam.

When Max changed schools again he was given his Report Book (containing pages for each year of elementary school) to take with him. On the first empty page Max filled in the marks he would have liked to have gotten. For Conduct, Effort and Neatness he would have liked nines, which he wanted for Reading and Dutch History too. For Drawing (which was not even taught at his school) he thought he should have a full ten. Gymnastics, Dutch Language and Writing deserved eights and Arithmetic and Geography sevens. He was a realistic child too,

though – he would have been satisfied with a six for French. Using mama’s fountain pen he carefully placed the signatures in their appointed places: the principal’s, the teacher’s and his mother’s; all beautifully imitated. He earned those high marks for writing and drawing.

In Bussum Eddy entered the second class of the Goois Lyceum; Max went to sixth grade at the Koningin Emmaschool, where Nelleke started as a first grader. Max did well there. His final report is full of sevens and eights, including those for Conduct and Effort. He only had two sixes left: for Writing and Gymnastics. The conclusion was clear: “Is going to the Lyceum” (the secondary school that prepares students for university) it says at the bottom of his report card.

In 1949 that still meant that choices had to be made. After the first, general year, boys could go onto either HBS or Gymnasium, that is the more science-oriented section, or the division with Latin and Greek. Girls had the further option of a modern language and art history course, but that was not open to boys at the time. After the initial choice, further differentiation took place at the end of the fourth year: Gymnasium students could opt for a heavier math program or more classics, the HBS was split into a higher math group and a group concentrating more on modern languages, economics and administrative sciences.

Max went to Het Byzonder Lyceum in Bussum, which became the Willem de Zwijger Lyceum in 1955. This private school, founded on Christian principles, also had classes in Religion, which Max appears to have found of interest. He got a nine. The same high mark is recorded for Drawing (which was actually taught there). In other subjects he was an average student and remained one. He was not conspicuous in class, his teachers did not really notice him much. He was neither very good nor very bad and certainly he was never rambunctious or impertinent. The other boys noticed him though. “Max was always getting talked about”, a friend remembers. He was always asking

questions, but in a nice way. Max regarded himself as the butt of the class in the lower grades. He says:

“Then came the Naarden-era: the sixth grade and the whole of secondary school; the period of growing up, the basic education in music, the time, to be specific, during which I began to see myself in comparison with others and became conscious of personal strong and weak points, eccentricities, being accepted or not. Obviously in my case early puberty was the period during which my peers accepted me least. That is the only period in my life when I remember having felt abandoned or left in the lurch. Probably you had to act brashly self-confident, be athletic and part of the crowd to be popular at that time. What I remember best is my astonishment when I realised that some teacher was going along with that general, obvious tendency instead of protecting the little loner. Luckily that rarely happened. The lack of friends was always the most noticeable on birthdays (who shall I ask?) and on vacations (how, with whom should I go on vacation?). But usually anxious anticipation was worse than reality and things turned out reasonably well after all. During the second part of puberty life suddenly got a lot better. My peers respected and accepted me more.”

Things were going badly at home. The factory was doing all right but Ko van Egmond and his partner disagreed on the rate of investment. It was too high for van Egmond. He was careful, conservative, “an insurance man in heart and soul”, as his elder son describes him. The future did not seem to him safe enough for his children. In addition, home life was not easy. Jo van Egmond had had a difficult time during the war; the radiant smile seen in pre-war snapshots never came back. Born in the Dutch East Indies, she had been sent to secondary school in the motherland, as was customary. Then she applied for a job with

Blom and Van der Aa from Amsterdam and was posted abroad to the colonial branch. Blom and Van der Aa had sent Ko to meet her at the docks which was usual when new personnel arrived. It was less customary for the administrator and the new secretary to fall in love at first sight. Jo van Egmond was a good organiser. Her marriage was a loss to the company, but she could use her talents as a colonial housewife. Everything in her house was always shipshape. She told her servants exactly how she wanted things done and kept a careful but friendly eye on everything so she was both loved and respected. She kept track of income and expenses, paid the bills and saw to it that everything was in order. Her children were properly spaced so she had plenty of time for each of them. And then came the war. Caring for three children, one of whom was newborn, she had to manage on what she could sell. There was no income after the Japanese invasion. Once in the internment camp, she had to live on what there was. Her husband, later her elder son, were taken away. She became exceedingly independent; fought for her rights, for her very existence.

After the war, repatriated to The Netherlands, she had to be very frugal. Jo had to manage without the servants who were there as a matter of course in the tropics. It was hard to learn to cooperate with her husband again – she had made all the decisions for so long – and her health had deteriorated. Her characteristic perfectionism, her sense of duty, remained. She demanded of herself and of her children that the house be run smoothly.

“I could write volumes about the dishes I washed as a boy, the lawns I watered,” Max writes. “I was caring enough to do it right. The others didn’t, they just made things worse. I was sorry for my mother too. I didn’t like household chores, it was dull devotion to duty. I get that from her: duty comes first. And on the outside everything always had to look perfect. If company was coming the house had to be turned inside out, made

spotless. As long as we were alone she looked furious, but the minute company came she was all charm.”

Max says this without resentment: he always had a soft spot for his mother.

“Imagine if the war hadn’t spoiled things!” he says.

“Maybe the children would have spent a few years in the Motherland for their secondary and higher education, perhaps that would no longer have been necessary. The whole process of growing up (music, sports, school, hobbies, vacations) would probably have been much more harmonious. The marital problems caused by lack of help or money wouldn’t have had a chance. Nor would the educational problems caused by the broken home. Of course the Dutch East Indies would not have remained a colony, but perhaps their well-earned and necessary independence could have been achieved by becoming some kind of Dominion, without the near war that occurred. But that was not to be...”

From his first year at the lyceum Max was a member of the school chorus. It was conducted by Mr. Colyn, the English teacher, who was crazy about Purcell. Here Max came alive. The little boy with his head in the clouds, who never had both feet on the ground, according to his teachers, snapped to full attention when he was allowed to sing. It was not long before Mr. Colyn chose him to sing at opening assembly on Monday mornings in the Spieghelkerk, next to the school. He was accompanied by his schoolmate Jan Wyn. The choral director was happy about Max. Mr. Colyn spent quite a lot of his Saturday afternoons riding his bike around after chorus members – asking if they would please come to rehearsals. The boys often played hookey, but not Max; he was always there.

Max was also accepted as a member of the children’s choir of the Spieghelkerk. Both the children’s and the adult church choirs

were conducted by Marcus Plooyer, a voice teacher from nearby Laren. He was not one to stick to the conventional repertoire: they sang Schütz Passions in the Spieghelkerk.

Meanwhile, Max entered the second class. He was over thirteen and beginning to grow up physically. He started to shave, one of the first in his class. The visible beard was at least interesting; a more disturbing phenomenon was the “beard in his throat”, as the change of voice is called in colloquial Dutch. Max became an alto and for a time sang in a “desperate falsetto”, but eventually he had to leave the church choir. He was allowed to stay in the school chorus, where he soon became a tenor and then a bass.

The other physical changes that belong to this stage of life were of little interest to him: “awakening sexual feelings didn’t seem to occupy me much. For a long time sex didn’t interest me, aside from a flame or two.”

In 1949, after a great deal of hesitation, Ko van Egmond decided to terminate his association with his factory. He accepted the offer Blom and Van der Aa had made earlier to return to what was now Indonesia. He had quite a number of years of tropical service (they counted double for his pension) and was offered attractive terms. He left his family behind in Naarden, arranging with Jo that she and Nelleke would join him halfway through the five year service period.

Every Wednesday afternoon, which was a half day off from school, the van Egmond children were made to sit down at the table to write Papa. Mistakes and carelessness were not tolerated. If they were found, the letter would be torn up and the child could start anew. Nelleke suffered most under this burden but for Max it meant in addition that the correspondence with his father was not really confidential. When Eddy had reached physical manhood he had received a book on sex education from his father – sexuality was not a topic mentioned in the van Egmond home. Max’s father was away during this period of his

life, but he had found the book in Eddy's desk while going through his things, so he was aware of what was happening to his body. He didn't connect it with any emotion. He heard other boys' tall stories, but they didn't strike a chord in him. He decided that would come later.

He failed most of his school subjects during that time. Even the seven for gymnastics became a six. Jo van Egmond always went to parent nights and spoke to the teachers whose subjects her children were threatening to fail. She talked to the gym teacher, a person few parents bother about. "And the man gave me remedial lessons at his home. Remedial gym!" Max is silent, surprised in retrospect. "But it was quite fun. He had a whole training room at home with a home trainer, weights and everything. I probably got interested in keeping fit about then." He had a seven again on his next report card.

Nice things happened at school too. Max remembers a happy Whitsun camping trip to the island of Texel with the geography teacher. The whole group left on their bikes for Den Helder, from where the ferry departs, but halfway there a northerly storm got so bad they could not fight it any more. A passing truck came to their rescue; the driver loaded the whole class on, bikes and all.

On Texel they went swimming – in water of only six degrees centigrade. There were also other joys: playing a variant of ping-pong: "The two players face each other along a long wooden bench. The middle of the bench (between them) is empty. One player puts the ping-pong ball in his mouth, blows it as hard as possible in the direction of his opponent, the ball bounces on the bench and the other player tries to catch it (in his or her mouth) and blow it back. Not hygienic but lots of fun."

In the summer of 1951 Jo van Egmond and Nelleke left for Jakarta. Max was not promoted that year and remained in the second class. Mrs. Bosch came to live in the house in the Heemskerklaan with her daughter Lous, who was Eddy's age,

while Eddy left for Amsterdam: he was old enough for the draft now and went to a polytechnic in order to get deferred.

Max stayed at home; Mrs. Bosch took care of this new family. Her husband had gone back to Indonesia, like Ko van Egmond. Lous was at the Goois Lyceum, on the same street as Max's school. Max often pushed her to school on her three-wheeled bike, as Lous had had polio as a small child in the Indies and internment camps were not well equipped for physical therapy. They had a lot of fun together. Max's dry, understated humor was already evident. He used to tell her the craziest stories with a straight face. Only his laughing eyes would give him away. Lous often almost fell off her bike laughing.

Max was very lonely at this time of his life. But nobody was allowed to know. The changes at home hardly contributed to making him less uncommunicative and introverted than he already was. At school nobody knew about his home life and even his schoolmate John van 't Hoff, who gave him piano lessons at Max's house once a week, was unaware of the changes. Max rehearsed for assembly with Jan Wyn; on Saturdays John van 't Hoff rode his bike over for their lesson and was given a glass of soda with a guilder put under the glass as payment. They talked and talked about music and nothing else. Teacher and pupil (both aged about sixteen) concentrated on Clementi and placing the music so that Max could see the notes.

Outside of school Max had one friend – Peter van der Duys. He spent a lot of time at Peter's house and became very friendly with his parents. Peter and Max worked for the local branch of the VCJC, the liberal Christian youth movement. Max became busier now and met a lot of people: schoolwork, chorus, VCJC took up more and more of his time. In the youth movement he learned a lot that was to be useful later, when he became secretary and treasurer of his branch. He also had a good time. In the summer the girls and boys sailed the Frisian lakes, in the North of The Netherlands and Max will never forget the

exhilaration of it. Sometimes they would sleep in pup tents on the smaller boats, sometimes on the larger sailing barges. The VCJC was “a real freebooters’ club” Max recalls fondly. Later, when Max was a student in Utrecht, he was a counselor in VCJC camps for twelve to eighteen-year-olds.

In 1953 Max went to dancing class and got his first certificate. In The Netherlands nobody ever does things just for the fun of it: you take exam after exam and end up with a drawer full of official-looking papers proving you can swim, dance, weave or whatever. Around May, Dutch papers always print pictures of sweating youngsters at desks and it is said that in spring “one half of The Netherlands gives the other half exams.”

In 1953 the VCJC players performed a Christmas play by Dorothy L. Sayers. The Christmas play was an annual tradition, first performed on Christmas Eve and then again on Boxing Day, the twenty-sixth, which is observed as a holiday in The Netherlands. That year an acquaintance of Max’s, Hans Geel, was also in the show. Hans’ father was an elder of the Spieghelkerk and the boys had been in the choir together. Hans, like Max, was involved in local church club activities. He describes the performance as follows:

“At the inn in Bethlehem, all kinds of people who had been brought together there by the census were discussing the social situation. In the middle of all this, Jesus is born. ‘Christ was not born in the Bible but on earth’ writes Dorothy L. Sayers. I was the servant at the inn and Max was the dignified Pharisee Zadok, tastefully attired in a white fringed tablecloth and wearing a beard. He resisted Greek and Roman culture and gave his views on the Messiah. And Max did a good job; in the first place acting dignified came naturally -and I can still look up to him with a certain deference when he is singing his impressive Christ somewhere – I sometimes think: Max, the converted Pharisee...

By the way, he played Zadok with such dignity that he could say the craziest things without anyone noticing right away. It wasn't till a few seconds later that everyone would crack up; then his eyes would laugh.

He always said 'Galileen' instead of 'Galilean' because it was spelled wrong in his typescript. Up to the dress rehearsal, and even during one of the performances, he actually spoke his lines about theater and circus being an abomination in the eyes of the Lord the way they were written in his text: 'tongel' for 'toneel', theater. Then everybody would gasp for breath, but the audience would notice nothing wrong because of his deeply serious expression and the reserved pathos with which he spoke. However the pathos could hardly be called reserved when he spoke about the 'fat bulls of Basan'. That was really very funny. Yes, Max was good at that. Many years later I was looking at that text; Max was a famous man by then, whose name we had seen on a poster in Rome shortly before. I laughed in my sleeve then because D. Sayers gives Zadok the Pharisee a text like 'Nothing is as demoralising as art and culture. May the curse of Korach, Dathan and Abiram come upon those who wallow in poetry and song'."

In the summer of 1953 Jo van Egmond returned home with Nelleke. During that period teachers beside Mr. Colyn and his wife (who accompanied her husband's chorus) were beginning to realise just how good Max's voice was. His French teacher, Mrs. Monsma, lived in the same street as the van Egmonds and she and Max regularly rode their bicycles home together. She thought he was a nice, attentive boy in class and in the fourth year he even got passing grades for French, but it was not until she heard him sing that he really caught her attention. She told Max he had a beautiful voice but that he did not have the temperament to match, yet. She advised him to disappear to

Paris for a year after graduating from school – to gain experience in life. This serious conversation took place while they were standing on Mrs. Monsma’s doorstep, holding their bicycles.

After one assembly Max was approached by his Dutch teacher, Mrs. Wuite, who advised him to contact the “Schola”, for that autumn something took place in Het Gooi which was to be of great moment in Max’s life; Dr. Anthon van der Horst, the conductor of the Netherlands Bach Chorus, decided to start a Schola Cantorum. Like all choruses, the Bach Chorus had trouble finding talented young singers and this seemed to Dr. van der Horst a good way of providing them and at the same time of training good young voices correctly. In order to find students, he visited all the school choruses in the neighborhood. His notes say:

“7/10/’53 Visit to Mr. J. Colyn. Director school chorus.  
general impression: At first, very negative attitude. Great fear of taking good voices. Has a few, but cannot do without them, backbone of chorus (about 60 children).”

Although Mr. Colyn certainly had the feelings described above and decided at first simply to send a list of candidates who had already left school, he nevertheless discussed van der Horst’s visit with his students. Soon Max van Egmond, from class 4 HBS A auditioned for Dr. van der Horst and his assistants, Mrs. de Moulin and Tine van Willigen-de Lorme, who was the voice coach for the Schola. He was admitted and his father paid the tuition fee – on condition that Max’s grades at school would not suffer, His first report from the Schola, written on March 19, 1954, says: “Development only starting. Voice is lovely. Particulars: vocal intuition.”

That spring Max was very busy. Very soon after he became a member of the Schola, Mrs. van Willigen suggested giving him private voice lessons, in addition to the classes he was already attending. At first these took place once a week. At the time

Max was also treasurer of the local VCJC branch, sang in the school chorus and in the Schola, which was to give its first performance in October of that year. He was taking solfège with Mrs. de Moulin, piano from John van 't Hoff and performing regularly both with John and with Jan Wyn. He realised he was no longer being teased by his classmates. For one thing, he was far too busy outside school to be bothered with them. For another he was becoming more and more highly respected by the musically knowledgeable teachers and students, which gave him a certain status. His classmates were also becoming older and wiser.

In June 1954 Max got through the fourth class by the skin of his teeth: he entered the fifth, final school year. He dreaded the final examination and just then he wanted to leave school and devote all his time to music.

The contradictory reports about this period are a good illustration of the difference of opinion between Max and myself regarding how and when he decided on his career. Several people, among whom a number of the aforementioned teachers, told me there had been some conflict when Max decided to leave school at the end of his fourth year. Teachers from both the school and the Schola objected, as did Max's parents, to his dropping out and urged him to get a diploma and then perhaps go to university.

At first Max absolutely denied ever having wished to leave school without finishing, but when I told him about the recollections of teachers who have always retained an interest in his career and who may certainly be assumed to remember the episode, he began to hesitate and finally stated: "Then I have forgotten all about it." He is convinced that the diploma is and was of great value to him. In the circles in which Max grew up, diplomas were in fact of paramount importance and his self-esteem would have suffered "even now" if he had not finished school. "I'm a guy who likes security," says his father's son, "but music crept in everywhere, like ivy through the cracks of a

window.” In his recollection, he decided on a university career independently, after which his parents gave him their support.

The unsuccessful attempt to choose music rather than exams at the end of the fourth class can, of course, also be seen as fear of failing. It is obvious that Max was well aware of how grueling the last year would be. On the other hand, there is the question of why Max was such a mediocre student. He was a tractable boy and did not try to shirk his studies to get even with pushy parents, he was not the type. His real talent for languages, which came to the fore as soon as he needed it for music and was mentioned even in his very first reviews, should have made him a perfectly good HBS A student; there is no doubting his intelligence.

He mentions three reasons for his relatively poor scholastic achievements: his dreaminess, which led him for example when doing a French translation about a little dog going through a door, to sink into deep contemplation of “dog” and “door” so that it took him hours; his intelligence, which he describes as of the kind that is mainly useful in practical situations and in the third place his tendency to put everything off until the last minute.

This final characteristic is only in evidence when he does not feel like doing something, I would be inclined to add, after more than a year’s observation. Max sometimes overloads his program to such an extent that he does not get down to memorizing words until after the last minute; it is a chore he hates as much as he ever did at school. A performance then turns from being a pleasant exercise into an endurance test involving midnight oil and that is precisely the kind of situation in which Max gets the feeling of “being lived” and not having chosen this himself at all.

It is perfectly possible that he was already so obsessed by words and music in the fourth class that there was hardly room for school. All his energy went into music: once he had accepted

office in the VCJC even the youth organization became an inconvenient obligation.

By this time Max was an experienced performer, in spite of an attitude (never lost) of indifference and even revulsion to situations where he is the center of attention. Singing, he had already more or less found the façade behind which “the real Max van Egmond” could hide; singing and only singing resolved the tension to which he was exposed.

There was plenty of tension at home, too. Eddy, having finished the polytechnic and joined the army, wanted to marry Lous Bosch, to which both sets of parents were violently opposed.

Max tried to bury himself in music and found another way of circumventing the hurdle of the coming exam: he applied for a job with his beloved radio. He was eager to work for the news, where he could turn both his fascination with the medium and his love for the spoken word to good account from behind a microphone through which he could be heard but not seen.

If he had been able to get a job with the radio immediately after leaving school, he is convinced he would never have gone to university. In my opinion his parents, motivated by the same feelings that made the secondary school diploma “a necessity”, put him under a great deal of pressure.

In November Max got his end-of-term report card. His father reacted as follows:

Jakarta, November 21, 1954

Dear Bolle, [a pet name, meaning “chubby”]

What a shame that Max has received such a saddening report. He must review everything in writing, that is the only way to get over his making mistakes in spelling. If he does not do so and do so consistently, he will fail at languages and I can see his chances of a career in journalism will be lost. He will at least have to be able to spell correctly, otherwise he will not stand a chance. Weak in Commercial Maths and Economics as well! What a

shame. I often have the impression that Max cuts corners. Studying with the radio on or in the living room where people are talking! You can't learn anything that way and can't concentrate so that it will stay with you. He knows that it is a *conditio sine qua non* for those voice lessons, that his Christmas report is a good one. If it isn't, then he will have to stop for the time being. His studies come first now. When he has his diploma in his pocket, we will see.

In December there was an important performance by the Schola. In the Grote Kerk in Naarden they made a recording for the liberal Protestant broadcasting company and the World Service, the international broadcasting system. They sang in the beautiful Burgerzaal, a Youth and Music program. "When the chorus made an entrance into the church – as they do in Naarden – he was always the last and tallest choirboy. And in Britten's 'A Ceremony of Carols' – where he always wore something white – he strongly reminded me of a Christmas candle" writes Hans Geel.

It was too bad that preparations for the Christmas performance and the Christmas school report had to be made at the same time. The name of Max van Egmond is followed in the books of the Schola Cantorum by a note: "December 1954. Not coming for six months."

In December his father wrote from Jakarta:

"Sometimes I don't know where to turn. I have done as well as I could for Eddy. I have tried to put myself in his position and explain as tactfully as possible what I think. And then I am doing my best to earn your living here and to ensure our future..."

Max and Nelleke's achievements at the Lyceum haven't been very good. By now we are used to Max's doing a lot of talking and not much work. I am disappointed in Nelleke though. The first year at the Lyceum surely isn't so difficult

that she has to work her head off. L But it seems she has been shirking too. It is all so disappointing...”

On December 18 the Schola performance took place; it was Max’s last for the time being. Then came the Christmas vacation, but on the twentieth he had to get up at the crack of dawn in spite of having no school. He was expected in Utrecht at eight fifteen a.m. for his army physical. A short time later he went home, feeling relieved, exempted for bad eyesight. The army did not want him. Now for the exams.

Between January and June, Max worked hard. He took remedial lessons in commercial arithmetic and bookkeeping from an experienced schoolteacher who was very systematic and thorough. Finally Max got the knack and was grateful that his own teacher, who had never managed to make him understand, “was a good sport about it”. He got passing grades. He also got boils.

All spring the letters from Jakarta were about the controversy with Eddy, Max’s exams and financial problems. Blom and Van der Aa did not make things easy for their employees abroad. They had to keep petitioning for certain rights and supplements, benefits. The value of the rupia fell in relation to the guilder and it became harder to live in The Netherlands on what was earned in Indonesia. At the end of May Max wrote his father a long letter about the first (written) part of the examinations and enclosed the exams for Dutch (correspondence) and the commercial subjects. He also sent newspaper clippings about the examinations and indicated which of the subjects he had chosen to write his Dutch essay on: *On the Border between Youth and Adulthood*. He was the only person in his class to have chosen that subject; a philosophical treatise, he said. His father replied on the subject of Max’s future:

Yes, I received Max's letter. We will wait and see how his final examinations have gone. He is noncommittal, but at least he isn't pessimistic, either. I am anxiously looking forward to next Thursday when you will be sending me a telegram.

If Max passes and then has a nice vacation, he is sure to become calmer and know what he wants to do. But you mention a few professions I don't much care for. A radio broadcaster is nothing special. They only need a few and anyway there is never any great future in it. I am opposed to his being a professional singer. That is only acceptable if you become famous. But if he wants to do it as a hobby I will be very pleased.

Social worker is a fine, humanitarian profession, of course, but you had better point out to Max that it is hardly a career for life, with possibilities of getting ahead. Of course I want him to choose something he can get ahead in. Jobs like being a radio broadcaster, social worker and singer have the disadvantage that you reach your ceiling very soon and never achieve anything to boast about. If he cannot decide, let him go to the seventh faculty [university: social sciences/economics JM]. It would be a good idea if he had a part-time job too, as otherwise he will have much too much spare time. Also, boys who have a job and study at the same time usually become fine people and it will add to his sense of achievement if he is earning something. If he starts by earning his own tuition [very low, by American standards] and his clothes, I will be more than satisfied. He has written me about paying for his board, but as long as he has a father who is earning his living, he need not worry about that.

The month of June was devoted to more studying. The eleven HBS A candidates did not take their orals until the fifth, sixth and seventh of July. That was nice and late. Max's schedule is

full of tiny notes written in pencil and three colors. He was not to forget to go to the post office right after the results were known; his father was anxiously awaiting a telegram: PASSED.

Jatinegara, August 2nd, 1955

Dear Chubby,

Doctor Max R. van Egmond, Psychologist: it sounds good, doesn't it? As you see, I have received your letter No. 9 and Max's No. 10. I have just written Max that I fully agree to his studying Psychology in Utrecht. I think that is a good decision and I believe Max will enjoy it. I don't know if you read his letter, but Max is always worried about the expense. He has made some optimistic calculations as to what this first year will cost (fl. 48.75, say fl. 50.00) a month and says that he will probably be able to pay his own way by the second year. I have written him to stop worrying about the costs for the time being, but that I do attach great importance to his really finishing his studies. If he can become an assistant to a prof later on and earn a little that way, I will be very happy, especially if the job is useful to him in his studies. But as for the rest, we will wait and see. He will certainly have other expenses and I don't mind that, either. As long as the money is well spent and he does his best. You had better get him nicely outfitted and then to work. We will correspond about the financial aspects again. As long as you can manage with the financial reserves until January 1, I will see to it that the monthly payments are increased then. By that time I will have been working another full year and there will be something in the offing. You will also have to increase his allowance considerably as, aside from his books, for which he will be sending separate bills, he will also need notebooks and want to go on outings and I do not wish him to

have to pinch pennies. So, there goes our university student.

I am glad he can go to England for two weeks. If my letter to him arrives after he has left, please send it on. I hope he will make good use of his time there and that it will improve his English. Two weeks isn't really long enough to learn very much, but at least he will get a taste of freedom and learn some idioms. That is very important for his studies too. Undoubtedly a great deal of the work will be in English.

I like the first snapshots Max took with his new camera and enjoyed the texts he wrote on them. On one you are "Madame" and the other says "Behind the wheel with tangled hair", but in any case I can see that you are driving on the right side of the road and that it was a nice little car. Max has sent me a long list of what he is going to do on his vacation, but I hope he finds the time now and then to send me a report of his experiences.

After a short but pleasant stay in London, with the camera his father had given him, Max went to Utrecht University. He was made aware of his new status right away: on September 5 he was invited to sing at the opening of the Lyceum's new building. "How do you do, Mr. van Egmond?" said the Principal, Ten Kate, formally. Now he was a university student.

Accompanied by Piet Kiel Jr., he sang an aria from *Messiah* and another Handel arioso in the Spieghelkerk – "superbly and with a pure, interpretative approach" according to the next day's *Bussumsche Courant* – his first review.

In Utrecht, psychology was part of the Faculty of Humanities and Law. The first part of the course, the "candidates' studies", was not at all what Max had expected. During his first year he took an exam on Testing Methods – which he just passed. He

was not terribly interested; anyway, he was busy doing other things.

During his first year, his almost forgotten application to work for the radio news suddenly bore fruit. He was appointed as the youngest news reader five days after his twentieth birthday, on February 6<sup>th</sup> 1956. From then on he paid his own way. It was an exciting experience, realizing that your own voice, picked from “several hundred candidates” as he found out later, was being heard by so many people. Max also had to arrange his own news to a certain extent. He practiced pronouncing foreign words before each broadcast to get them all right, and the photograph taken with his microphone shows how much he was enjoying himself.

At this time the lovely voice with its deep timbre belonged to a Dutch boy like thousands you could have met in the streets any day. He was quite big; over eighty kilos, one meter eighty-two and fairly thickset. His thick glasses in their dark, heavy frames make him look very conservative and his preference for suits, which goes back to when he was a schoolboy – make him look like a man in his thirties. In addition, the badly-cut jackets were not meant for someone whose shoulders and chest were that broad. He still starts his day as he did then: by exercising with weights and a chest expander in front of the open window, doing sit-ups and his breathing exercises.

The snapshots taken at performances during this period are all equally solemn: Gentleman with a Score, in front of, next to or behind one or more instruments, his face a mask. They elicit cries of horror from present friends.: “Was that you?” There is a marked difference between these pictures and the rare vacation snapshots; a grinning boy in a rowboat, wearing trunks and no glasses. It looks as though there are years between them, but in reality there is just a month.

When he started his university career, Max had decided to live at home. He did not feel the need for the freedom traditionally

aspired to by students. He was only too happy to be with his mother and sister and in February 1956 his father also came home for good. But when he was hired by the news service, it was on the condition that he would rent a room in Hilversum, for when he was on the night shift. He did so but only stayed there when he was on duty at night and he bought a moped. He zoomed around Het Gooi on it – from home to classes, to voice lessons, to the studio, to Schola. To keep from catching cold he attached a large plastic windscreen to the handlebars. You could buy one in any bicycle store. He also bought himself a leather coat, waterproof pants and heavy leather mittens. Looking like a man from Mars, he would arrive at his destination and have to peel off layers of clothes, quite a job.

The Schola was singing in public regularly now; they gave evening concerts “Around the Bach Organ” in the Grote Kerk in Naarden and they once sang in the Spieghelkerk too. “Wenn Sorgen auf mich dringen” from Bach’s third cantata *Jesu, der du meine Seele*, “Shepherd, Shepherd, leave decoying” and Purcell’s “Sound the Trumpet”. As early as 1956 Max, who was not yet a member of the “adult” chorus, was permitted to sing with the adults in the Naarden *St. Matthew Passion*, the most prestigious of the many performances given throughout The Netherlands around Easter. He has sung there ever since, with the exception of 1966 and 1974. He also sang at a students’ concert of John van ‘t Hoff’s; his first Schubert, “Das Wandern” and a much-loved Carissimi song, “Vittoria, vittoria!”

As a second-year student, Max took a few more exams, but near the summer it was decided that psychology was not the right thing for him. At his professors’ suggestion, he switched to sociology.

He felt more at home there at first. “The work had more to do with people,” he says. He became a member of the student society called “Prometheus”, a club for “Nihilists” (a student term for people who dislike highfaluting student societies) and of the sociology students society in Utrecht (USSV). The 1957

University Guide tells us that it "...is a student society. It is certainly not a social club, nor does it wish to be as it serves an entirely different purpose from that of a social club." The serious young people involved in this group went to lectures, which Max attended regularly at first.

As he was now really participating in student activities, Max also became a member of the USKO. The Utrecht Student Chorus and Orchestra was then under the direction of Hans Brandts Buys. It was a unique institution. In the partitioned world of Utrecht student life where, as in every other facet of social life in The Netherlands you were expected to be either Roman (Catholic), Dutch Reformed or Red and even people who did not want to were pressured into setting up some kind of neutral group, everyone could be a member of the USKO. There were (and are) no auditions: students who did not know enough music could not keep up or taught themselves. There is a lot of coming and going in a student chorus. To give them some feeling of togetherness, Brandts Buys would take the whole group to the country once a year and spend a week studying a Bach Passion or the *b-minor Mass* undisturbed. This took place in the Maarten Maartenshuis in Doorn.

Even before the 1956 "outing", at the first rehearsal Brandts Buys had discovered something special among the newcomers. "Hey, young man, come to the front" he called to Max. He sang solo that very first year in the USKO: the bass arias in the *St. Matthew*. A short time later he added luster to John van 't Hoff's student concert by singing the recitative and aria "Mache dich, mein Herze, rein." He also sang Handel's arioso "Dank sei Dir, Herr." There are no recordings of these first performances of music he still sings regularly, not even real reviews of his USKO solo. Under Brandts Buys the soloists remained anonymous.

In 1957 Max really began to gain recognition. In October the Ymuidens Dagblad wrote after a concert: "A very special note was struck that evening by the appearance of Max van Egmond

singing Negro spirituals, well, although sometimes too loudly accompanied by Henk Hofland. Van Egmond, a news reader, turned out to have an exceedingly beautiful voice which he uses well and with great musicality, so we will be more than pleased to hear him again, as was more or less mutually agreed upon.” In December the *Bussumsche Courant* published an article about his voice teacher, Tine van Willigen-de Lorme, in which she mentions her promising student. “The vocal world will be hearing from Max...” He did a few more exams and gave a recital in the Dutch Reformed Church in nearby Blaricum. The *Gooi- en Eemlander* newspaper was satisfied with the achievements of the organist Rutger van Mazyk, but had some criticism of Max: “His delivery needs to gain expression and focus, his articulation could be clearer and the voice needs more brilliance. If the singer succeeds in improving these areas through serious study and self-control, the future holds perspectives”, GCWvdH pontificated.

1958 was marked by Max’s increasing interest in the world of vocal music. He cut reviews of interesting concerts out of every paper he could find. The names of the conductors are encircled in red ballpoint. Sometimes there are addresses and even appointments written on them; Max wanted to audition.

“Youth and Music” in Zaandam gave him a chance in January. With Henk Hofland as his accompanist, he sang spirituals again. In February he sang <sup>A</sup>the *St. John Passion* with the USKO and in March he sang in Alkmaar with the orchestra of “Youth and Music” under the direction of Nico Hermans. There, for the first time, he performed Bach’s *Cantata 82* – “Ich habe Genug”. Not only the *Alkmaarse Courant* praised him, *Het Vrije Volk*, a national daily, wrote about his “velvety baritone voice” and both reviewers were deeply moved.

After the Naarden *St. Matthew* he found the time to take a Preliminary Sociology exam, before singing *Cantata 82* again in

Laren. He also sang an aria from *Judas Maccabeus* by Handel. More good reviews, another student recital at John's, late shift on the news, lectures, mopedding around Het Gooi.

In May he sang for the first time in Amsterdam, in the Bachzaal, the Conservatory's concert hall. The Amsterdam Police Chorus "Euterpe" and the young people's orchestra were conducted by Nico Hermans and Max's aria "Ich habe Genug" was loudly applauded. The critic and composer Geza Frid said he showed great promise and comments by many reviewers showed that the young newsreader's voice had become familiar in Dutch living rooms.

In June and July he took a few more exams. Hans Brandts Buys, who conducted the Arnhem Toonkunstkoor as well as the USKO, asked him to work with the Arnhem group.

You don't have just one debut; every appearance in entirely new circumstances is really a debut. In that context I remember the performance of Schumann's oratorio *Faust*, an oratorio that is almost never performed. Hans Brandts Buys was conducting the Arnhem Toonkunstkoor at the time.

This *Faust* has a few major parts which were given to renowned soloists of the time, among whom were Leo Ketelaars and Erna Spoorenberg. There were also about six smaller parts, for which Brandts Buys asked young singers. I was one of them and I was as proud as Punch to be on stage with such famous people for the first time. I had sung solo under Brandts Buys before with his Utrecht Student Chorus and Orchestra, but there all the soloists were debutants. At the time I was still working for the radio news, in order to combine reading the news in Hilversum with rehearsals and the concert in Arnhem, I had to make all sorts of terribly complicated schedules for traveling, sleeping and so on. On the day of the concert there was an orchestra rehearsal in the morning in Arnhem; in the

afternoon I wanted to try and get some sleep as I had been on the late shift the night before in Hilversum. Of course I wanted to be bright as a daisy at the concert, however small the part. Instead of finding a hotel room for the afternoon (which is what I would do now), I decided to search out a quiet place in the building the concert was to be held in, Muis Sacrum. I could have a nap there. Of course there was no question of a private dressing room with a sofa. So I searched the building, which was old and grimy, for a soft secluded spot. It had to be hidden away because I didn't want to look like a fool. Well, I found every single closet, storage room, attic and organ loft in the place and finally stretched out in a loft. To make a long story short, by the end of the afternoon I wasn't sleepy any more but my hair was awfully dusty.

Of course I watched carefully how the "stars" did things. I remember exactly how Leo Ketelaars arranged his tails as he sat down.

I also recollect clearly that Erna Spoorenbeig complained of a stomach ache when she was in her dressing room. When the conductor asked her anxiously if she would be able to sing, she answered in her breezy manner: "Of course, man, it isn't here, it's *there* I", pointing first to her throat and then to her stomach. That was my debut with the stars.

In October Max sang Bach's *Cantata 56* for the first time – "Ich wil den Kreuzstab gerne tragen". At the end of December he took his preliminary sociology final and, although he was unaware of making any decision, his student cards for the rest of that school year and the next were never used again.

Naarden, December 29th 1958;

Dear Secretariat,

Thank you for sending me the prospectus concerning the 1958 Vocal Competition, May I request you to put me on the mailing list for THIS year's prospectus when it is ready and also to send me the application form? Thanking you in advance for your trouble, I remain yours sincerely, M.R. van Egmond.

1959 was an important year. Max decided he was a singer and that he was going to keep his diaries. They tell us that he attended recitals regularly in 1959/60 and also made a note of programs of interest on the radio. Even at that time he seldom went out purely for entertainment. Rehearsals, performances and the radio news took up all his evenings even then. As a result he went straight from a schoolboy's schedule into the curious routine of a musician – you do not miss what you have never known.

He has no idea why friends with a conventional life style (naturally he does not have many of them) express sympathy when they find out that he can seldom come to parties, even during the weekends which are “time off” for most other people. Being out of step with normal working hours only bothers him when he notices that the opening times of stores and the tram and train schedules forget to take his (and many other people's) working hours into account. Being out of step is made very hard in The Netherlands.

On January 16<sup>th</sup> Max went to a recital given by his idol, Elisabeth Schwartzkopf. On February 17<sup>th</sup>, he sang the arias in the *St. Matthew* with the USKO. That performance in the Utrecht Nicolai church was the last Hans Brandts Buys was to conduct. He died suddenly a few days afterwards.

In 1959 Max left the Schola to become a member of the adult chorus of the Bach Society. At the end of March he sang with

the choir in the Grote Kerk in Naarden again, but now as a full member. In April he gave a church recital in Bussum and sang in his final student concert with John van 't Hoff's pupils. He sang spring songs: Schubert's "Im Frühling" and Handel's "Spring". John accompanied on the piano and Henk Clements played the oboe. The three of them were to work together a lot later that year.

Max asked for and received a letter of recommendation from the Dutch musicologist Caspar Höweler. The Bach Society also performed the *b minor Mass* that summer, with David Hollestelle as the bass soloist. The conductor, Dr. van der Horst, had decided on a method of supporting him during the "Quoniam", where a natural horn, two bassoons and the continuo are playing; he had a small number of basses from the chorus join in. Max was one of the chosen few. Ten days later he sang solo again, this time at a student concert of Mrs. van Willigen's, his voice teacher. But in the meantime he had taken an important decision: he was going to compete in 's-Hertogenbosch.

He worked hard all summer. Even when he was not working for the news he was busy all day long. He worked on his physical condition so that his body, his instrument, would be in perfect shape. Breathing exercises, scales, vocal exercises. Finding and memorizing repertoire in the three obligatory categories: Lied, oratorio, opera. For the preliminaries, for the semifinals, for (who could tell) the finals.

In the middle of his preparations the tension at home became unbearable: Eddy and Lous Bosch had had enough of all the arguments with their parents. They took matters into their own hands and eloped to England where, being of age, they could be married without their parents' consent, which was needed until age thirty in The Netherlands at that time. The wedding took place at Eastbourne on August 1<sup>st</sup>.

On the twenty-fourth Max gave a try-out at the home of his friends, the van der Duys family. He sang his program for Den

Bosch: Handel's "The Lord Worketh Wonders", Bach's "Eilt, ihr angefocht'nen Seelen", Mozart's "Der Vogelfänger bin ich ja", Mendelssohn's "Gott sei mir Gnädig", Berlioz' "Devant la maison de celui qui t'adore" And then – the Competition.

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## Back to 1980

A few days after the unexpected *Dido and Aeneas*, Max sings in Hengelo, Overijssel, with a local choir. He is to perform Bach's *Cantata 56* which has been part of his repertoire since 1954 and of which he made a recording with Frans Brügger's Baroque Ensemble, Max enjoys singing the *Kreuzstab Cantata*.

There is a rehearsal on Saturday and the train for Hengelo (a couple of hours from Amsterdam) leaves at 8:30 a.m. Max has to change trains in Amersfoort where he will have to wait for the local. He is a train schedule enthusiast and likes mapping out his trips, so when he discovers he can change to another train which leaves Amersfoort at once and does not stop again till Hengelo, he has to find out why. Ah! This is the Hook of Holland/Scandinavia Express, running late. Now he can sit down and have his breakfast. He has brought "coffee" (two spoonfuls of decaffeinated Nescafé in a thermos bottle of warm milk). He pours this brew carefully into a mug, adds muesli and eats the result. Later on, he arrives in Hengelo before he is expected and he has time to sin in the neighboring shopping center: espresso and apple pie with whipped cream. Then, back to the station where he is to be picked up.

The local Baroque ensemble is rehearsing in the Sion Church where tomorrow's concert will be held. Max has been asked to lecture to this group of young enthusiasts on performance practice, but has had trouble finding time to prepare. So he adds some general commentary to his dialogue with the conductor and the musicians. He talks to them about transparency, the hallmark of Baroque music, which he compares to Brussels lace which you have to be able to look through to appreciate all the details. By analogy, the Romantic period is a patchwork quilt, with overlapping pieces. "Baroque notes," he says to the group,

“may be rounded. You don’t have to connect them; that’s been taken into account. The acoustics in the church do it for you.” Before he starts singing Max has to go brush his teeth. Then he rehearses for an hour, is taken back to the station and arrives home in Amsterdam at half past two. Five hours of traveling for one hour’s rehearsal; that’s the way it goes. Later that afternoon he wants to paint the walls of the spare bedroom, because Nancy Zylstra is coming to visit. She is an ex-student of his from the Baroque Performance Institute in Oberlin and has now become his assistant there.

Sunday, Max goes to Hengelo again, a little later in the day. His train does not leave till half past twelve, but this time he wants an hour to spare, just in case. That turns out to be a good thing because just before Hilversum someone has jumped in front of the train. The horrible incident only causes a ten minute delay, but that is enough to miss the connection in Amersfoort. Max looks perfectly tranquil but tension envelops him like a magnetic field.

In Amersfoort he has to wait forty minutes so he “calmly” gets out his file of back correspondence. He consults the train schedule every five minutes and forgets to phone Hengelo. When he finally arrives there, the man sent to collect him is standing on the platform sweating blood. Max has already brushed his teeth on the train. At half past three precisely, as the concert is due to start, Max enters the church. Tijn van Eijk is already at the organ, the members of the chorus and orchestra heave a collective sigh of relief. As the chorus sings the opening section of the Mass, Max can take a breather. “Kyrie eleison...”

When he gets home, Nancy has arrived for her two-week stay. She wants to go to concerts and museums. The foregoing weeks have been spent auditioning for several conductors in Germany and Max wants Nancy to give a house concert in Amsterdam but he does not have much time to spend with her. Tomorrow he will have to go to Brussels for a rehearsal with the BRT, the

Belgian broadcasting company. However, Nancy knows a few people here and is going to see her friends bariton David Barick, who lives in Amsterdam now, and Webb Wiggins who is studying the harpsichord with Anneke Uittenbosch this year. They all met first in Oberlin at BPI and there are several other BPI students around: The Netherlands has become the crossroads of the world for Baroque musicians.

In the meantime Max is slaving away at his BRT assignment. They are going to record the whole *l'Eau passé* cycle by the Belgian composer Rosseau, who died recently. There is to be a rehearsal in Brussels on Thursday and the recording is the coming weekend, but on his way to the station Max suddenly feels so sick he turns around and goes home. Obviously some virus is going around, they tell him when he phones to say he is not coming. Several other people are in bed and the whole project is postponed.

So Max has no concert for a whole week. He teaches classes, catches up on his correspondence, rehearses every day and even finds time to go swimming a couple of times.

On the thirteenth, rehearsals start for the concert in Leersum on the eighteenth. The Friends of Art Song are organizing this house concert and he also has a recital with Wendela Bronsgeest and Thom Bollen to give for them on the sixteenth, a repeat of the one on October 1<sup>st</sup>. It is in the Gooiland Theater in Hilversum this time, a place he started singing as a boy. The recital with Webb Wiggins in Leersum will consist of both Baroque and Romantic music, including some Schubert. Webb will be playing both the harpsichord and the piano. He has worked through the scores by himself before he and Max start rehearsing together and now they are going to have a preliminary talk. Webb sits down at his recently-repaired instrument. In spite of all the precautions, the elaborate packing case and the huge HANDLE WITH CARE stickers, somewhere between New York and Amsterdam a hole was made in the soundboard. Luckily specialized repairs like this can be made in

Amsterdam and in the end take less time than persuading the insurance company to pay up. The harpsichord sounds as good as ever, but Webb never wants to take it on a plane again. The first item on the program is Brevi's *Catena Terrena*. The first aria is all right, but Max is dissatisfied with the following recitative, "In Profundo". He notes that he will have to add some ornaments to make it more interesting. He also wants to stretch the largo, to change the mood for the following allegro. Neither of the musicians is pleased with the transition from largo to allegro. "Handel would never have done such a thing." Max is going to sing four songs by Purcell. Webb is using a copy of the original score in which the bass has not been realized. Only the bass line and vocal line have been written down. He has to decide what to do with the right hand himself and he feels that it is taking him much too long. In the middle of the rehearsal they are startled by low-flying jets. Later, on the news, they hear that a couple of army Starfighters have been buzzing De Groote Keijzer, a large building in the old part of Amsterdam, which has been occupied by squatters. As the army's jets are not supposed to do any such thing, they wonder what all the noise means. So does Webb's landlady, coming in to bring coffee. Webb has bought the cookies himself; he knows what Max likes. During their break they discuss the problem of transporting the harpsichord to Leersum, a little more than an hour's drive away. They are going to rent a small van for the trip, but first they have to get the instrument down the spiral staircase. Wednesday, Max and Webb rehearse at Max's house. He has both a harpsichord and a piano, which they will need for the part of the program after the intermission: Fauré's song cycle *Poème d'un jour* and Schubert songs. They tape this session for later reference but the cat Ramses, who is fascinated, turns the recording into a purring recital; they have put the microphone by his chair.

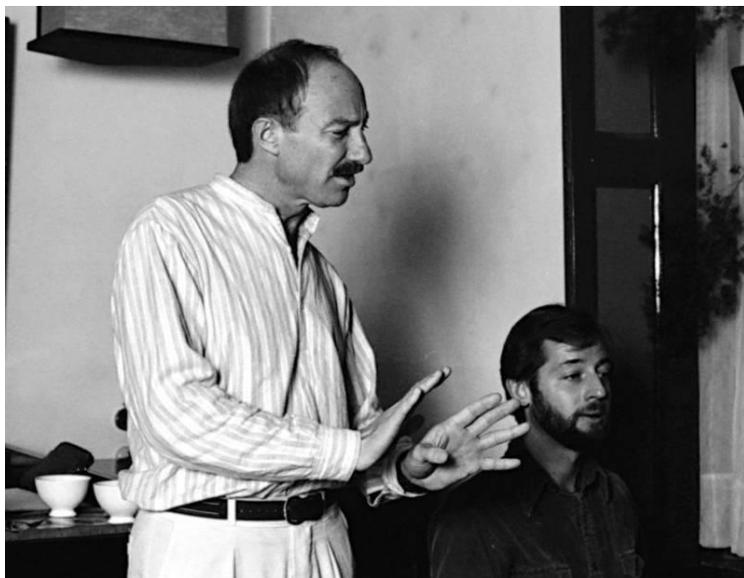
Max has some trouble with a run in the Brevi song. He starts wrong a couple of times and wants to keep repeating that part until he knows it perfectly. Webb makes a few mistakes too. It seems as though it is harder for them to correct things if they have heard them done wrong once or twice, but in the end it all sounds fine. Max makes some tea and brings in a huge platter full of buttered cookies. All objections by weight watchers are waved aside: “if you don’t want the butter you can lick it off, can’t you?” Then they get back to work.

After Thursday’s classes, Max goes to Hilversum for the recital with Wendela Bronsgeest. Before leaving he rushed into the nearest cheap barber shop for a haircut, as he had paid more than he liked at his good one. His hair is now “just a little” short and Max looks a bit hollow-cheeked as a result. No one dares to mention it; he is clearly sorry. Like any other performer, he is sensitive about his appearance. Every performer is on exhibit, especially the singers. Instrumentalists can hide behind their instruments or at least bend over them. Opera singers have a costume on and often wear a wig, but a concert singer can not conceal a thing. Every movement of a singer’s is observed and Max is very conscious of the fact. He consoles himself with the thought that it must be even worse for ballet dancers.

On Saturday morning a small migration takes place. Beside Max and Webb, several other people are going to Leersum: this is Webb’s first concert in The Netherlands. Nancy is coming and can see a little of the country en route. David and his accompanist Eric Cobham are coming, Jehan-François, my husband Frans and I. The original plan was for Max to drive the rented transit van, but now that several people with Dutch driving licenses have joined the party, he has been persuaded to let somebody else do it; there will be enough for him to do once he gets to Leersum.

The recital is going to be at the home of the bass Hans Zomer, who runs the Friends of Art Song’s local branch. He has a gorgeous house in the middle of the woods.

The harpsichord has to get there early so it can acclimatize and then be tuned. In the meantime Webb can go for a walk and Max is given a room to withdraw to later in the day. He prefers not to talk at all just before a concert and that is easiest to do when he is by himself.



*Leersum , October 1981: Max van Egmond , Webb Wiggins,*

About fifty people come to listen that evening, which is a lot for a house concert. The tapestries on the walls of the music room have been covered with plastic sheeting for the occasion, otherwise they would absorb too much of the sound. The temperature in the house has also been adjusted to concert level, or rather to a level the sensitive instrument needs. It is a little chilly for the audience but the performers do not notice.

When the house was completely renovated, mainly by the people who live there, they kept the house concerts in mind and stood the concert grand on a platform with a trapdoor. All the

extra folding chairs are kept in the storage area underneath. The kitchen is roomy enough to hold a lot of people drinking coffee. The bathrooms in the Zomer house are something else. Upstairs they have a fantastic plexiglass shower stall in the middle of the floor and the downstairs toilet, which guests use, is an antique with hand-painted flowers on it. It is flanked by a urinal bearing a large sign: MEN, which seems redundant. Seeing how high it is, no little boy could manage and it is unlikely that any woman would try. There is a bottle of eau de cologne by the washbasin and even tampons – which is pretty thoughtful in an all-male household.

It is not just people who are treated with consideration here: next to the fireplace there is a private exit for the Rottweiler dog Querijn and the doll house the three cats have appropriated is in the kitchen.

The concert is great. Max is in lovely voice. The ornamentation and the run in the Brevi are beautiful. Webb plays well and with the restraint of the good accompanist: he watches Max who gives him almost unnoticeable signs when he is ready to begin a new song. The program after intermission goes well too. Webb has practiced on the grand during the afternoon and feels comfortable with it.

After the concert Hans and Gert build a fire in the huge fireplace but not until the harpsichord has been carefully dressed in its fur coat (with the fur side inside) and taken out to the yellow rent-a-van. Then everybody has a glass of wine. Max discusses the extensive renovation of the house with his old friend Hans Zomer, relaxes and enjoys himself. On the way back to Amsterdam Max acts pleased. He has sung well even in his own opinion (and of course he is not as easily satisfied as the audience) and his accompanist has done a good job. Webb is lying on a pile of mattresses in the back of the van, with the harpsichord. He and Jehan-François are analyzing the Brevi and the Purcell, note by note. Back in Amsterdam they will have to hoist the instrument up the spiral staircase again, before

everyone can get to bed. Tomorrow is Sunday, so they can sleep late.

In the week that follows, Max teaches according to his regular schedule. He also rides his bicycle down to the music department of the main public library to leaf through some music books. He is always on the lookout for lesser-known works to sing. The music library of the municipal museum in The Hague has a large collection of music too, which he occasionally finds time to browse through.

The artistic advisory committee of the Friends of Art Song have a meeting that week. It is held at the home of Cora Canne Meyer, the opera star and Max's colleague at the Conservatory. The vice-president Thea Ekker, pianist Thom Bollen and Elisabeth Cooymans are there too. They and various other members of the committee discuss Vocal Technique in The Netherlands, a subject about which the Ministry of Arts wants a movie and a booklet. This will require setting up yet another committee.

The Friends of Art Song have other problems too. They are going collectively grey and badly need young blood. How do you get young people interested in the Art Song? They discuss this for a long time. The Friends ought to be better known; more can be done at the local level, they decide. On the other hand, the Lied is not really attractive to very young people, somebody offers. The point is hotly debated. Could their interest be stimulated? Could the schools help? The meeting gets side-tracked here: they have been asked to do a program on "Aspects of the Lied" for the school radio. What about a link with the literature of the modern languages at school? Max did a program with George van Renesse in 1974 entitled *Lieder and Poetry*. Nowadays writers are invited to come and give lectures at secondary schools; maybe a suggestion could be made to invite singers too?

The members of the artistic advisory committee come to a few conclusions, make some definite arrangements and spend a frustrating half hour trying to find a date for their next meeting. There is always somebody out of the country.

The Edison Award is conferred by the Dutch producers and importers association, for both classical and popular recordings. The classical Edison is awarded in twelve categories, including symphonic music, contemporary music, recitals, chorus and an extra prize for a young Dutch artist which was not awarded this year, 1980.

Max's first Edison was for *Songs of the Baroque Era*, a recital for Telefunken's Das Alte Werk series with the Leonhardt Consort in 1967, which won in 1968. The next year the Harnoncourt recording of Monteverdi's *l'Orfeo*, on which Max sings the parts of Pastore IV, Spirito III and Apollo, got the award and in 1970 it was won for the authentic *St. Matthew Passion*, with Concentus Musicus again under the direction of Harnoncourt and with Max singing the bass arias. In 1971 Max was notified that he was a prize-winner once again, now for *Il Combattimento and other Madrigals* with the Leonhardt Consort, recorded like the previous disks for Telefunken's Das Alte Werk. However, as far as Max knows, the award was never conferred that year. No one seems to know what happened. Now, however, he has been asked to keep the end of October open for an important event. For months all those concerned have known that the Huygens recording was going to win an Edison. It is a unique collection of Latin psalms, Italian arias and French airs for which the music was composed by Constantijn Huygens, the seventeenth-century Dutch scholar, diplomat, poet and composer and called *Pathodia Sacra et Profana*. Huygens also wrote the texts to most of the French songs and several of the Italian ones. There was some commotion about the award, not because anyone was

in doubt about the quality of the recording, but because it was conferred in the category “Middle Ages and Renaissance” where this music, with its realized basso continuo does not belong, according to some musicologists. Not everyone agrees, but seeing that other records were eligible for the prize in that category, it might have been better to award it in the category of “special recordings”.

The second point of the debate concerned the person to receive the actual award. It was conferred on the producer, Klaas Posthuma, who had succeeded in putting a superb product on the market. But he could never have done it without Elly Ameling and Max as singers, harpsichordist Anneke Uittenbosch, Toyohiko Satoh on the lute and Jaap ter Linden, viola da gamba. Each of them ought to have been given one.

Be this as it may, the occasion is going to be very festive, as it is now twenty years ago that the first Edisons were conferred. In August the word went round that the Edison was to be awarded some time in November. By September Max knew that October 27<sup>th</sup> and 28<sup>th</sup> had been selected for the television presentation and that the ceremony itself would be on the 29<sup>th</sup>.

The first rehearsal with the Utrecht Symphony Orchestra under the direction of Corneliu Dombroaveanu takes place on the afternoon of October 27<sup>th</sup> in the Vredenburg Music Center, where the program will be recorded for television. Max is to sing twice: Haydn with the orchestra, Huijgens with a harpsichord. Only the Haydn aria “Dice, benissimo” is to be rehearsed now; Max and Anneke Uittenbosch can practice somewhere else.

Max is surprised at the pains taken to perfect this performance: “We had to do it four or five times!” but the trip to Utrecht and back takes three hours from house to house and the rehearsal was only thirty minutes. The lessons Max cancelled at the Conservatory have to be made up that evening. Tuesday afternoon is to be devoted to the dress rehearsal which the television cameras will record “just in case”. That means people

will have to wear what they plan to wear for the performance, which causes confusion as no general announcement to this effect was made. Make-up is not deemed necessary for the dress rehearsal, though.

Max and Anneke Uittenbosch were supposed to perform at a quarter to three, but as usual things take longer than was expected. At half past, they finally get to work; until that time they wander around in the cafeteria where it is too noisy to work (and where there are a lot of smokers) or in the dressing rooms, one of which Max is sharing with the cabaret artist Robert Long and the tenor saxophone player Dexter Gordon. Their dressing room is large, by Dutch standards – so large that the grand piano is not in the way. Each of the gentlemen finds a bottle of wine and a piece of Camembert cheese on his dressing table “with compliments”, which is thoughtful of the AVRO broadcasting company. Max is only able to warm up for a few minutes before he is disturbed, but that is enough. He goes through his song and the aria without accompaniment, walking up and down the room. Once in a while he moves to the piano, to touch a key. Then it is time to change. Tails are tails, you might think, but that is not quite true. If you add a colored bow tie, preferably a large one, you look even nicer and with a cummerbund in the same color, the whole outfit is perfect. Max chooses gray for this occasion, but that turns out to look drab on the color monitor, so he decides on blue for the evening’s performance.

While Anneke and Max are waiting their turn (“If Zacharias finishes the Scarlatti quickly, we’ll be done by four”) zealous technicians of all kinds are rushing back and forth. There are cables all over the place and youngsters carrying reams of green paper and beepers hurry in and out. In a corner behind the platform a man has been busy all afternoon arranging hundreds of gorgeous red roses in vases: they have no scent.

When Scarlatti-on-the-piano is almost over, Max and Anneke go on stage. On an elevated platform at the back, Pieter D’hont’s

original of the Edison is brilliantly illuminated. It is flanked by the first vases of roses. The orchestra is seated in front of it and on either side of them the word EDISON appears in colored lights.

The anchor man for this show is Willem Duys, a popular television personality. He interviewed Max on his talk show in 1969 and for a few minutes they talk about that. Then Max persuades him to mention Anneke Uittenbosch's name when announcing their Huijgens and they agree on the text. The harpsichordist starts to play. You cannot hear her at all and by way of compensation Max sounds like a whirlwind. The cause is obvious: Max, who never works with amplifiers in a concert hall, sounds much too loud via the AVRO's microphones and there is no equipment anywhere near the harpsichord. The technicians do something about it but the balance is still not good.

For the "real" recording that evening there is a live audience. The people are told when to clap but when a number has to be done over several times, they get fed up with it. When it is Max's turn everything goes well except that just before he starts there is a dull thud. He doesn't turn a hair and calmly starts to sing. Questioned later as to what fell off the stage, he answers nonchalantly: "Oh, a person."

Then Dexter Gordon comes onto the stage, carefully maneuvering between the roses and the orchestra. This afternoon in the dressing room he was already disseminating enough alcohol fumes to flatten an elephant. Now he puts his music on a stand and lifts it wildly above his head. The music stays on it as if glued in place. He puts down the stand, pulls out his glasses, polishes them carefully and puts them on. During his whole number he will keep pushing them back up his nose – seemingly without removing his hands from his saxophone. It is not clear whether he is unsteady on his legs or cannot see well, but he

keeps moving backwards, still playing, until he almost ends up among the first violins. He plays beautifully.

After the concert there is a cold buffet. Max has two complimentary tickets and has bought a couple more at twenty-five guilders each. He and his friends enjoy themselves watching the star of the evening's show, Charles Aznavour, who is surrounded by a group of men whose stature, clothing and protective attitude are strongly reminiscent of a Godfather's heavies. Max is charmed and has asked specially for a poster because his name is right under Aznavour's. The poster goes in the bathroom, "where everyone can see it."

At the party after the show, the contrast between the various categories of Edison winners is clearly visible. Although tails and dinner jackets have been discarded, it is easy to distinguish between the classical gentlemen and their popular brothers. The difference between the groups of ladies, jeans versus evening gowns, is even more interesting. The members of the orchestra (here illegitimately, they were not invited) are still wearing white ties, just to complete the picture. The groups do not mix much.

At half past eleven Max calls it a day. In just under twelve hours the official presentations will take place in Amsterdam. Hours earlier, when the show was taped, Duys had announced that this occurred "the day before yesterday," as the show will not be broadcast until Friday night. Now Max considers it high time to go; he has a lesson before tomorrow's eleven a.m. festivities. Diving into the now overfamiliar and malodorous catacombs of the Vredenburg, five people and a metal disk liberate the small Renault in which Max is returned to Amsterdam. Of course he has to sit in the middle of the back seat, on the frame.

At ten forty-five the next morning he arrives at the stage door of the Amsterdam Concertgebouw, one of the great concert halls of the world. It is adorned for the occasion with a red carpet and

velvet ropes on shiny brass posts. The doorman will not let Max in. “You may enter on the other side,” he says haughtily. Max heads back into the cutting autumn wind and goes around to the other side of the huge building – resigned. “Oh well,” he observes, “you get used to this sort of thing.” People are friendlier on the De Lairessestraat side of the building. Large billboards have been put up, with the sleeves of the award-winning records on them, and in the Spiegelzaal, the mirrored reception room, coffee and cake are served. There is a certain amount of tension in the air and lots of smoke. Everyone is waiting for a celebrity and no one seems quite certain as to who it is. One smart guest has a look at the cards on the chairs and comes back to tell us that Princess Margriet, the Queen’s sister, and her husband Mr. van Vollenhoven are coming. Pieter van Vollenhoven is known to play the piano, so that branch of the family gets to do some of the musical openings with which the royal family is burdened. Now we know who we are waiting for and only twenty minutes or so later than planned, people are asked to sit down. More confusion follows. The non-royal chairs all bear cards saying “Edison Winners” and some people take this all too literally. They are assured that others who have contributed to the recordings and their guests may also have a seat. There are again hordes of photographers and cameramen. Somehow the third row is filled with people wearing clothes varying from neat to chic, the first two rows being reserved for the royal party. Behind the well-dressed winners, less noticeable, are the members of FLAIRCK and other groups of young prize-winners, many of whose clothes look suspiciously like what they were wearing last night and possibly have not taken off at all; the party went on into the wee hours in Utrecht. Max is sitting beside Klaas Posthuma the producer, who is to receive the statuette, and the lutanist Toyohiko Satoh. Anneke Uittenbosch came too but seems to have decided the whole thing looked so pretentious that she went straight back home.

The people in the third row rise as Princess Margriet arrives; those behind them do not. They probably never noticed, being deep in conversation. When Eric Jurgens, the president of the NOS, (the national broadcasting company) starts making his endless and entirely irrelevant speech they are quiet for a short time. Deciding that nothing of interest is going to be said, they then continue talking. Some people sit and stare at the princess's hairdo.

When Jurgens finally gets to the awards, he reads out the jury reports, which all those present have already received. We read along. Klaas Posthuma goes up on stage, right after Bernard Haitink who is looking a little unhappy, fetches his Edison and brings it back to his seat. He gazes at the statuette and decides that the little man is not very good-looking. After all the Edisons have been awarded, even the ones Jurgens forgot the first time, the princess goes back into the Juliana foyer and the winners are asked to follow her and have an "official portrait" taken. While the photographer groups the winners, the other people present are given much-desired glasses. There is champagne and there is smoke. After a few desultory remarks to friends and admirers, Max goes home. He is expected back in the Concertgebouw at three p.m., this time upstairs. There is a rehearsal for the soloists in the *b minor Mass* which is to be sung in the Grote Kerk in Naarden on Saturday.

The rehearsal for Naarden only takes half an hour. In the upstairs foyer of the Concertgebouw conductor Charles de Wolff of the Dutch Bach Society awaits his soloists and obligato instrumentalists. They do not have to travel all the way to Naarden (not more than half an hour from Amsterdam but fairly inconvenient to get to) for this rehearsal of recitatives and arias; it can easily be held at the orchestra's "home base". The Amsterdam Chamber Orchestra, which is playing in Naarden, is made up of members of the Concertgebouw Orchestra. It is convenient for Max too: he lives within walking distance.

They rehearse the “Quoniam” with the continuo and the “corno da caccia” as the natural hunting horn is called in the Bach Society’s program. Under de Wolff, who took over the chorus in 1965 when Anthon van der Horst died, the bass sings the “Quoniam” by himself. Max, who started singing it in support of the soloist as early as 1959, could do it in his sleep. Of course there are different interpretations; what de Wolff wants is not the same thing as what Harnoncourt, for example, would want. The latter conducted the *b-minor Mass* Max recorded for Telefunken. The tempi are different. The two conductors also have different views on ornamentation. Max himself feels that Bach hardly ever needs any ornaments; Telemann and Handel are a different story. The way in which ornamentation is added is the singer’s responsibility, at least under conductors Max works with. There is another important difference in performance: the instruments. When authentic wind instruments are used Max is sometimes blown away, especially during the “Quoniam”, but there are no problems with the modern instruments used today. They go on to some recitatives and the “Et in Spiritum”. Charles de Wolff is sitting on a bar stool and has draped his body over it like an overcoat. He conducts leaning back, stops the proceedings once or twice, says something to an oboist. Once more, a little faster. De Wolff has already had an orchestra rehearsal today and will spend the evening in Naarden working with the choir. It will not be as pleasant there as it is here in the Concertgebouw, though. They don’t turn the heating on for rehearsals in Naarden – too expensive.

The alto Sylvia Schlüter and the American tenor Howard Crook have arrived while Max was singing. He is finished for the day, their turn now.

On Saturday. the *b-minor Mass* sounds beautiful. It has suddenly turned really cold outside, but the Church is quite warm. Aside from today’s performance, tomorrow is Sunday so the heating was turned on and will stay on. Nevertheless the audience keeps its coats on as a matter of course, something the soloists can not

do. Max wears thin woollen turtlenecks on these occasions, which go well under a suit. Howard has a white silk scarf around his neck.

On Tuesday, November 4<sup>th</sup> Max goes to the old clandestine Mennonite Church, in Haarlem where he is to record for Telefunken. All of Bach's sacred cantatas are being recorded, an immense project begun by Nikolaus Harnoncourt and Gustav Leonhardt in 1971. They do research into the original instrumentation and tempi of each cantata and then record it using authentic instruments. Concentus Musicus of Vienna and the Leonhardt Consort, based in Amsterdam, each do half. In 1980 they recorded the twenty-fifth album in the series, with the cantatas 99 to 102. That was the half-way mark. Telefunken put out a cassette for the occasion, on which Leonhardt and Harnoncourt explain some aspects of their work. The two soloists who have been in on the project from the first, Kurt Equiluz and Max, perform on the cassette too. Today and tomorrow the cantatas 113, 114 and 117 are to be recorded. They will appear on albums XXVIII and XXIX in about a year and a half.

Harnoncourt records in Vienna; Leonhardt started off in the Mennonite Church in Amsterdam, but has moved to this clandestine church in Haarlem, where even less extraneous noise (traffic!) penetrates the walls.

The church is hidden behind a row of houses and can only be entered through a side door. It is freezing; the heating system is on the blink. Gustav Leonhardt is seated at the positive (organ) which Max had built by Jürgen Ahrend in 1975. At first Max was very happy with it and often rented it out, but after a while organizing transportation, arranging for someone to be home when it was brought back, repairs and tuning were too much trouble so he sold it to the COMU, which coordinates early music performances and the COMU has rented it to Telefunken today.

Gustav Leonhardt is playing, with his raincoat on and his glasses halfway down his nose. His legs are a bit long for the small positive but he is so absorbed by the music that he does not even seem to notice his uncomfortable posture or surroundings. The church reminds me of films about London during the Blitz. There are large squares of foam plastic propped up against the walls, hanging from the ceiling, lying on the floor. They are not there to protect anybody from flying glass, though, but for perfecting the acoustics. Max will be standing between two sound-refracting partitions when he sings, in front of a battery of microphones. After a few experiments someone comes and moves the partitions a little; they were developed by a Telefunken technician.

The ensemble for the recitative and aria consists of the continuo and two oboes: authentic wind instruments, played by Ku Ebbinge and Bruce Haynes, two of the best Baroque instrumentalists in the world. Like the strings played by Marie Leonhardt and Wouter Möller, the woodwinds are even harder to play than usual due to the extreme cold. The players' warm breath affects them so they have to be tuned after what seems like every second measure.

The technicians and apparatus belonging to Telefunken are in a side room. After each take, the performers go in to listen. This is a group of perfectionists, so thirty-two takes are needed before everyone is satisfied. Even then, they decide to splice part of one take onto a piece of the preceding one.

During the recording they leave room for patching in. The fact that this is technically feasible leads to a measure of perfection on recordings which can not be achieved at live performances. People try, however, and that in turn leads to a higher and higher level of excellence. Anyone who doubts this should listen to pre-war recordings of then renowned orchestras and choruses. Paradoxically, the way in which the fantastic recordings of, for example, this cantata series are made is the least artistically satisfying part of Max's work. He stands there, in an empty

church with a handful of colleagues and technicians, in a jumble of wires and microphones, and is supposed to deliver an inspired chunk of cantata from somewhere in the middle of it. He has to think his way into the preceding chorale or instrumental section before starting to sing. This time he has only been asked to make a fresh start thirty-two times; on occasion it has been over a hundred (but that was with a trumpet). That is the way musicians have to work. The final result, a coherent cantata, is a triumph of technical/acoustical but especially of musical know-how. The demands made on all the musicians are great; those made on the musical director are enormous. The Erasmus Prize Leonhardt and Harnoncourt just won went to the right people.

In the meantime the technicians are making comments. They move a curtain (several have been hung on improvised curtain rods in various parts of the church) and Max has to take just one step back, then they can record again. Max has retired into his own world. He reacts to the technical directions like an actor to a director: one ear for the directions and the rest of his attention given to the music, which is only sounding inside his head. He has taken off his coat, warmed by his exertions, but in the ice cold church his breath is visible as he sings.

At three they call it a day. This aria from this cantata (113) is done. Tomorrow, 114 and 117, at least Max's part. Gustav Leonhardt plays the organ a little longer. Tomorrow only he, his wife Marie and Wouter Möller will be playing.

The next day they get off to an early start. The banner headlines in the Amsterdam editions of the morning papers proclaim Reagan's victory throughout the Central Station. The Haarlem papers have not got that far – they still leave it at “leading by a large majority”. It is even colder than it was yesterday and the heating still hasn't been fixed. The Leonhardts have arrived and tell Max that Wouter Möller is going to be late: he has been chasing a thief.

By the fifth cup of coffee Wouter arrives. He is out of breath and apologizes profusely. What happened? He saw a stranger in his

garden, just disappearing over the fence. He could hardly leave; who knows what the man had been doing? Wouter had visions of broken windows, a shambles, maybe even a wounded neighbor. So he called the police. Everyone agrees that it was the only thing to do. Luckily there was nothing wrong in the area, but the investigation had taken some time. Three quarters of an hour late, Wouter goes off to tune his cello. Leonhardt has gone back to the organ and is whistling Max's part as he plays. For technical reasons the musicians have to stand or sit well apart. Therefore it is hard for them to hear one another, which makes entering difficult. Partitions are dragged around again. The technicians can not do with the echoes behind Max; they confuse the sound. The echo in front of him is useful, though, an expert explains.

Max has dressed in accordance with the weather conditions in the church. He is wearing a plaid woollen scarf and has a black-and-white knitted cap on with a pompon. "Take one:" *Der Schöpfer selbst...* "That's the way it goes", says Leonhardt. They have finished by one p.m. and Max is ready for something to eat in a nice warm café. The road to the station is paved with them and with clothing stores too. After lunch and the inevitable apple pie, Max goes shopping for new trousers. He tries on something hip from "Vanille" in Paris: loose around the thighs and tight around the calves. It does not look nice on him; he had better skip this new look – so back to Amsterdam and a rest.

That evening Max gives a special recital. During last year's pre-Easter Passion period he had accepted two engagements to sing on the same night, due to a misunderstanding. That really is impossible and the Christian Oratorio Society of Heemstede had waived their right. Max was touched and promised to come and sing for them on one of their rehearsal nights: tonight, with Webb Wiggins.

The van has been rented again; the harpsichord comes back down the spiral stairs and off we go to Heemstede, a prosperous

suburb of Haarlem, some twenty kilometers from Amsterdam. The choir secretary sent a letter saying exactly how to get to the Petrakerk from the highway. A cinch. Max has brought along an American student of his, James Tucker, who missed the concert in Leersum. He can help carry the harpsichord.

The instrument is set up in the church to acclimatize; the people go and eat. Max has organised a basketful of marvelous food: he has boiled eggs, bought raisin bread and tomatoes, the almost black, sweetish rye bread you can get in Holland, and all kinds of fruit. He even has salt with him, but nothing to drink. That will be provided at the parsonage. All the food disappears quickly and Max is pleased. Then the performers change. Webb sees to his instrument, which has to be tuned once again. Max warms up. As usual he does so walking up and down the room. Going “nimme numme” he sees a closet door standing open and looks inside. Still in the middle of his scales he turns around triumphantly bearing aloft what he has found: a jigsaw puzzle depicting some Bible scene. Gorgeous. He puts it back and inspects the other Sunday school objects: pots of glue and brushes, colored pencils. These articles obviously conjure up old memories – Max’s eyes light up with pleasure. He remains joyful and carefree all evening.

The program is the same as in Leersum but it sounds very different. Max is singing for the fun of it. His whole body moves more freely; he is hanging loose. He taps out the rhythm with his shoe, something he usually only does during rehearsal. He uses his whole arms, not just his hands, for the gestures he makes and he is beaming. This is his own territory and he feels at home here.

He pays for the carefree performance with a couple of small mistakes but the gain is more important. Wouldn’t it be wonderful if he could always sing for an audience with which he feels so at home. Max has been working with this choir and conductor Jan Pasveer since 1967.

There is a Linsen organ in the Roman Catholic St. Bartholomeuskerk in a tiny place called Beek-Ubbergen, near Nijmegen. On Sunday afternoon, November 9<sup>th</sup>, Max gives a concert there with the organist Jan Raas. When Jan was a student at the Amsterdam Muzieklyceum he and a group of others went to Geneva on a student exchange program. Max was the teacher in charge.

He and Jan worked together minimally before this concert, in contrast to the way Max and Webb rehearsed. Max sent Jan the music he planned to sing and one day before the concert they finally got together for a rehearsal – not using an organ, but with the “slightly out of tune” piano in the Nieuwe Looiersstraat, at Max’s house.

Each piece was played through once and a few minor changes were made. They base their cooperation almost entirely on previously acquired knowledge, leaving one another free to improvise the ornamentation. The Brevi cantata is on the program again but sounds very different with the piano (and later the organ).

When they start on the brief and very simple “Hymne du Soir”, a melody from the songbook of the Brothers of Moravia (1420), Jan suggests improvising and not rehearsing it together at all. First he will play the prelude, then Max will sing the first stanza without accompaniment and unadorned. Then Jan will do an improvised stanza followed by Max doing an ornamented one and finally they do one together. Both of them get a little nervous about this adventure but stick to the decision not to practice together.

The next day Max and I travel to Nijmegen by train through a snowy landscape, highly unusual for November. There is a gentleman with a car waiting for us and we are driven to Beek, a tiny village with an immense church.

On the way Max enquires, shivering slightly, about the heating. According to our informant it is pretty good. They heat the

church with hot air, blown in through grills in the walls. Of course the heating system must be turned off during services (and concerts), Max will understand. It would make too much noise. Max understands perfectly. You cannot see that a person is wearing pyjamas under a neat black suit...

The church is huge and pretty cold. Max goes into the organ loft. The eclectic-looking building has brownish marble floors in the aisles, which are separated from the nave by marble pillars. There are fourteen paintings depicting Christ's road to Calvary. The altar and the pulpit are highly decorated and the ceiling above the altar has been painted bright orange – in contrast to the rest of it which is modern mustard yellow and dotted with spotlights. The floor is provided with a Persian carpet and a red one, side by side.

The church-goers sit with their backs to the organ loft, where the singer positions himself between St. Joseph with the Christ child and St. Anthony of Padua. Joseph has a metal halo with prongs, from which Max keeps well away. His voice sounds good here, the organ is not too loud but the echo is quite strong. The hundred and fifty people who are expected will not be enough to absorb it either. So Max will have to articulate very carefully and bite off his words. That will make the words audible.

All these careful preparations turn out to have been useless during the first part of the recital. In an effort not to look like part of a trio by standing right between the two statues, Max backs up half a meter and stands on a small wooden platform he has found. Even that little distance is too much. He is almost inaudible in the body of the church and has to come back up front for the second half. But nobody knows that during the rehearsal.

They practice from two to three and then the church organist comes in to tune his instrument again for the actual concert — seemingly with a bread knife, as that is what we find lying next to it when we return. Jan and the organist discuss the stops for a few minutes and the fact that pulling them out is so hard, the

panel gives every time it is done. The trouble the organist is having can be seen even from downstairs. The keys rattle too and Max says there is an extra register – castanets. It is to be hoped that many people will support the organ funds, as is requested at the entrance. It is necessary. The sound produced by the instrument is still lovely, though.

At three p.m. we head for the café next to the church at which, according to the program, “it will be possible to talk with the organist and the performers after the concert, while enjoying an appropriate drink” (a hot toddy?). Right now they have good pea soup which Max happily eats, half an hour before the concert, with black rye bread, French bread and coffee with a cookie. Then he has to brush his teeth; it is almost three-thirty and time to start.

First on the program is an organ solo, then two songs, “In Nomine Domini” by Haydn and Mozart’s “Gesellenreise”. A Freemason’s song and the Brothers of Moravia in a Roman Catholic church – pretty ecumenical, says Max. Then Jan Raas plays a Bach trumpet solo which is followed by the Brevi cantata. Jan again with a cornet voluntary by Stanley, for which Max turns the pages before going back out of sight where he can sit with a coat over him. He wants to blow his nose before singing the Mendelssohn aria which follows (“Gott Sei mir Gnadig” from *Paulus*), so he waits for the applause which has been following each number. That is unusual in a church and in this case seems to be led by one person with very strong hands. Perhaps the person was asked not to clap any more; anyway, after the Stanley there is dead silence. Max sits there with his handkerchief at the ready, looking amazed. He has to blow and does so in a shatteringly silent church, but hopefully he cannot be heard downstairs. Then he gets up, grinning, straightens his face and walks calmly to the platform where he renders the aria with great beauty.

The improvisation follows. Jan and Max are a little tense, although the audience cannot tell. The music certainly does not

sound tense, but that is professionalism. The melody and improvisations sound as assured as if they had been rehearsed for a month. Both men are satisfied with their performance. Although they were convinced that it could be done, they are very happy now that it is.

After a final Bach fugue they are invited into the café where they are given a blue voucher each, entitling them to coffee and a cookie.

Max is given the pretty poster designed for the occasion and the same nice man who picked us up at the station takes us back to Nijmegen. After a relatively uneventful journey through the Sunday night countryside, we arrive back in Amsterdam at eight p.m. Time for dinner.

On November 14, Max keeps his promise to Cora Canne Meyer and gives her class a lecture on the Baroque, in return for hers on chest register for his students a few weeks ago. Max's views on performance practice are given in the appendix, so a short summary of his lecture will suffice here.

Max points out how logically it all hangs together: if you think about the atmosphere, the style and the history of the period of origin, what to do should be perfectly clear. Before limiting himself to the Baroque, he says that every period must be approached from its own background, not just pre-Mozartian music. Max compares Schubert with Wolf and Bach with Handel. But he also goes into the difference between singing a recitative and an aria. Then he sketches the development of vocal performance from the Middle Ages to the present, including the element of improvisation. The development of the instruments and its effects on singing are discussed.

Then Max gets on to practical points. He demonstrates some ornaments and earlier vocal usage. Finally, the students get their turn; a few arias are run through and discussed, questions are asked and of course the use of vibrato is considered at length.

After about two hours the session is over and everyone goes away to think about it.

On the fifteenth, the next day, the Friends of Art Song hold a meeting to commemorate Julia Culp at Queekhoven. The famous singer, born in 1880, will be recalled in speeches by a member of her family, an ex-student and by Felix de Nobel. Jard van Nes will sing modern versions of songs she loved and her records are to be played. Max is very curious about the quality of these early recordings.

The Friends have a board meeting before lunch where we meet a number of music students from abroad who are living at Queekhoven while they study in Holland. One of them is Jim Tucker, a student of Max's. Queekhoven is a large estate on the river Vecht, which has room for lectures, conferences and concerts, besides housing students. It is owned by the Eduard van Beinum Foundation. The buildings are surrounded by gorgeous gardens and meadows with many kinds of plants and trees. There are also a lot of animals. Sadly, this is a wet, windy November day and the windows in the pavilion look out on to a field full of sopping sheep and a pair of soaked peacocks. Julia Culp's ex-student, Desi Halban, tells us all about her teacher. Her lecture is interesting but the ancient recordings that follow are more gripping still. A lot has changed in vocal practice, says Max. The interpretation is very different from what we do nowadays.

Felix de Nobel does not speak long. He is very ill but wants to say a few words. When Max thanks him he calls de Nobel "Maestro", an unusual term for Holland. At the beginning of his career Max was given a great deal of support by Felix de Nobel. As early as 1960 he had invited Max to join the Nederlands Kamerkoor, the Dutch chamber chorus. Max only stayed for three months and sometimes he recollects that time a bit wistfully, when life as a soloist has been getting him down. He writes:

“Working with the chamber chorus was wonderful. But I had this worked-up feeling that I had to build a career as a soloist and I thought that couldn’t be combined well with the choral work, so I didn’t stay long.

In the chorus it is possible to sing in a relaxed fashion, without the great responsibility of soloism. One is also freed from all the organizing and the financial bother. Nevertheless, members of the Dutch chamber chorus can sing solo regularly. If, like myself, one has no terrific urge to shine personally, a job in a small, select chamber chorus is a fine thing. But I didn’t realize that at the time!”

Felix de Nobel taught Max a great deal.

In his final speech at the end of the meeting, Max mentions the record album which is to be released on the society’s anniversary. Five records of Dutch compositions with Dutch soloists, that is quite an undertaking. It has to be ready in May; the Friends of Art Song can subscribe now!

On November 22nd and 23rd, there are performances of the *Vespro della Beata Vergino*, in Heerlen and Roermond in the southern Netherlands with the Camera Mosana, Musica Aurea and the Schola Cantorum of the Basiliek Onze Lieve Vrouw (the Basilica of Our Lady) of Maastricht. The conductor is Jean Wolfs.

Monteverdi’s *Vespers of the Blessed Virgin* (1610) was composed in a new style. According to the musicologist Marius Flothuis, this was “partly caused by an effort to displace the power of the music over the words and to make music the servant of the poetry. The voice was to express the feelings in the text, therefore all the attention was concentrated on the vocal line and artful polyphonic orchestration was sacrificed to a simple, harmonic accompaniment. Either that or instruments are used to heighten the effects. The new music is realistic, the modern composer ‘builds on the fundamentals of truth’ as

Monteverdi says in the foreword to his fifth book of madrigals (1605)” (Marius Flothuis wrote these words as part of his introduction to a performance by the Dutch Bach Society under Mark Deller in May 1977).

Just before seven-thirty a.m, Max gets out of a brightly-lit subway car with cheerful red doors, onto the grim-gray platform of the Amstel Station. He wants to find out whether the tram and the metro will get him to the Amstel Station faster than tramline 16 will take him to the Central Station. His train for Sittard leaves from the Central but stops at the Amstel and he lives between the two. As the metro line is a new one, he is experimenting. It turns out to make practically no difference. He has his breakfast on the train: black rye bread and the Dutch wagon-lits coffee, of which he partakes with the score on his lap, gathering crumbs.

Aside from the small bass part, Max always stipulates that he gets to sing the low tenor aria “Audi Caelum” when doing Monteverdi’s Vespers. It is within his range and “and then at least I get one decent solo. The tenor gets enough.”

Change trains at Sittard where we catch a local and the landscape becomes un-Dutch. There are even hills. Heerlen is quite close and the usual orientation takes place: Max stands in front of the station and scans the horizon for the biggest church. But there is not a single one in sight. So, ask an elderly passer-by. “I always look for an older person; young people know nothing about churches.” Directions are forthcoming.

The St. Pancratius Church is on a little hill behind the busy market place. The parking lot is full, which is going to create problems for the orchestra. While the singers, who arrive on time at ten, wander up and down the aisles and make small talk, the members of the orchestra have to find a place where they can park their vans and then carry all the instruments, including a positive organ and a harpsichord, into the church. The two instruments then have to be assembled, which takes time,

especially for the positive. This is to be an authentic performance.

The church was probably built in the twelfth century, at least the bottom half of the sandstone tower was, and the Romanesque basilical nave. It has semi-domed vaults over the aisles, with barrel-vaults rising towards the north transept and some indeterminate vaulting on the south side. The acoustics turn out to be good, which is the main thing.

The temperature seems all right at first but for sitting still it is just a little too cold. When the rehearsal finally starts there are other problems. The tenor, Howard Crook, got sick yesterday and his replacement has not yet arrived. The second bass, Peter Kooy, is not here either. That was agreed on ahead of time. Peter had another engagement and Max will rehearse the echo with him tonight at seven. Peter is an ex-student of his and they have sung together quite a lot. The first time, in 1970, Peter was still a boy soprano, singing in the *b-minor Mass* with his father's chorus, the Nederlandse Cantorij.

Today's chorus has twenty-six people, among whom two countertenors. Two of the chorus members take the echoes for their absent colleagues, tenor and bass, at this rehearsal. The orchestra consists of a number of Baroque violins (three at first but later in the morning a few more arrive), three cellos, a lute, harpsichord, trumpets, natural horns, a couple of cornettos (a curved wooden wind instrument, recorders and the positive. The latter instrument is very different from the one Max had built. It has visible bellows. The organist sits at one of the short sides, opposite a person who lifts one of the bellows approximately every ten seconds. As it collapses slowly, he picks up the other one and when more volume is required, he lifts both bellows at once. To know when this will be necessary, the organist's assistant has to read the score and he literally has his hands full. People take turns doing this arduous job.

The members of the orchestra are seated in front of the altar steps and the chorus stands behind them. First the sopranos stand

to the left and the tenors and basses to the right where they can not see each other. Later they move closer together. The second tenor and bass, who have to sing the echoes, are in a difficult position. They can not hear the orchestra very well from where they are and the soloists they are echoing have their backs to them.

When not singing, the soloists sit on chairs placed between the orchestra and the chorus. Max is fascinated for a while by the bellows which are always lifted at the last possible moment. Then he goes for a walk around the church; he has not got all that much to sing. He keeps his trusty plaid scarf with him, sometimes for wearing and sometimes for sitting on.

Jean Wolfs beats time noisily and hisses ear-piercingly when the chorus is too loud. This rehearsal is given a special cachet by the knowledge that we will be forced to leave at quarter to one at the latest, as there is a funeral service scheduled for one sharp.

Preparations are going on in the midst of the rehearsal, with people moving back and forth carrying items ranging from large white candles in beautiful candlesticks, to wooden trestles.

When the rehearsal threatens to take too long they start placing wreathes, but they do not bring in the coffin yet.

Marius van Altena sings “Nigra sum” with lovely ornamentation. Everyone gazes at him admiringly. An Antiphone and Psalm 112 follow. At the end of the Gloria the tenor emerges alone again from a tangle of voices. “AAAA....*ha....ha....*” long drawn-out and wonderfully ornamented; all eyes are on van Altena again, “...*men!*” The voice slips down to a sharp dissonant and the soloist looks around innocently as members of the orchestra and chorus and the conductor burst out laughing. Max doesn’t think it is so funny.

After the rehearsal everyone hurries away from the church. Nobody really wants to meet the funeral cortège. The hotel is nearby and looks fairly expensive. Max is recognized by the receptionist, who knows that she ought to know who he is but

does not quite remember. The form says he is “known” and therefore does not have to fill out any papers on checking in. Max insists he has never been a guest at this particular hotel before (which is perfectly true) and his implicit refusal to take on the role of a celebrity (“probably some other van Egmond”) is rewarded by paper work. Please fill in..... The next morning the girl will be terribly apologetic. By that time she has remembered.

The Grand Hotel is managed by a tapestry freak. Tapestries cover the walls and the halls which are long, narrow and identical. The numbering on the doors is also unfathomable so the tapestries give us the only clue as to where we are, once we have left the reception area. Max has a nice big room with an equally large adjoining bathroom. It contains a toilet in one corner and a shower miles away from it. My bathroom next door is the size of a large closet and contains a bathtub which can only be reached by climbing over the toilet.

During lunch (a hot meal, instead of tonight, because dinner just before a performance is not a good idea) Max tells me that all the space is functional after all: he can run away from the toilet which spits instead of swallowing when flushed. Luckily he was not yet dressed for the concert.

The mental capacities of the designer and maintenance crews are the next subject we discuss, being unaware at the time that this hotel is to close its doors for good after the weekend. The food is excellent at all events and the restaurant is free from pollutants like smoke and Muzak. There is nobody else to be seen. It is so quiet the conversation becomes desultory and we look at each other more and more muzzily. When Max announces his intention of getting back to work after the apple pie, he receives no answer. When I get into bed I hear him moving around next door, but not for long. Silence. He too was up very early.

There is a short rehearsal early in the evening. Both the tenor and the bass need to work with their echoes. Max wants

something to eat before that and the restaurant is still nice and quiet, although a tableful of card players has been added to the decor. One of the disadvantages of being away from home just before a performance (which is almost always the case) is that you have to choose between food and the tranquility required for concentration. Max solves the problem by having the capacity to isolate himself, even in company. He can shut the curtains, as it were. Presumably he learned how to do so very young in the internment camp. Others have been aware of this ability of his since elementary school and people who know him well can see him do it. It is very useful in hotels, restaurants, airplanes and trains. Now he is gazing vacantly into space and eating toast with molasses *and* sugar on it – possibly to lubricate his throat. On arriving at the St. Pancratius church he is shown into the vestry which is doubling as a dressing room. Services are going on. There is a supermarket cart filled with missals in the hall, very practical. Less practical, at least for the musicians, is the loudspeaker connecting the vestry with the church. It can not be disconnected and allows us to hear the mass, part of which is sung. *The Lord is my Shepherd* does not go very well with Monteverdi and makes tuning the harpsichord slightly difficult. After the services the acolytes and the priest enter the vestry. The money boxes disappear into a large safe, the vestments are carefully lifted over violin cases and dinner jackets on hangers are put away. The larger instruments are hoisted back into the church and then of course have to be tuned again. Just before eight the church is practically full. The English tenor (who had to fly over) has finally arrived and has had time to practise with van Altena for a short while. Max and Peter Kooy have rehearsed their echo too. He and the young Englishman, Andrew King, have to stand well behind the chorus to get the acoustics right. Although the echo is clearest like this, it means that the soloists lose all contact with the orchestra and the other singers. Timing is very difficult for them and also for the chorus and the men singing the Gregorian chant from the organ loft.

The rehearsal did not help at all because an audience makes the acoustics change drastically. Still, performances like this one are often excellent, for which there really is not much of a rational explanation. The good results must be based on a mixture of experience and intuition.

*The Vespers of the Blessed Virgin* take an hour and fifty minutes. Then all the instruments are loaded back into the van for the trip to Roermond, close by, where the next performance will be given on Sunday afternoon. The singers go out for a drink before bedtime.

The English substitute, Andrew King, would love to have a talk with Max, whose singing he greatly admires. Max suggests a drink at the hotel, where Andrew is staying too, but the night porter says it is too late – at quarter past ten on a Saturday night! One of the chorus members knows of a café and Max, who would really rather go to sleep, allows himself to be talked into going, for just a little while. The place turns out to be a ten-minute walk from the hotel and filled to the doors with people, smoke and canned music.

Max orders a cup of pea soup and King, who says he has not had a decent night's sleep in a week, orders cognac, as does the tenor from the chorus. He has a lot of stories to tell us about King's College, Cambridge, where he attended university. The college choir is nicknamed "The King's Factory", which led to a lot of play on names.

After about twenty minutes Max has had enough. The two young men are clearly determined to make a night of it; they are about to order a third round of drinks. King is disappointed and wants to talk to Max some more, so Max suggests breakfasting together. His murmured "nine o'clock?" brings such a look of horror to the young tenor's face that Max makes a concession: nine-thirty. Manfully his admirer agrees and says goodnight. When we get there the hotel proves to be locked. After all, it is almost eleven p.m. Max tries tapping gently and then – irritated for once – bangs on the glass door. Eventually the porter lets us

in. All the main lights are off; only some kind of night lighting shines dimly in the hall. “We don’t seem to be very welcome”, Max remarks quietly. We grope our way upstairs and find the right corridor with the help of the tapestries. And so to bed.

Obliviously adding insult to injury, Max oversleeps and does not enter the dining room until ten the next morning. There is Andrew King, looking a little pale. He has already had breakfast. Being afraid of oversleeping, he had asked to be woken up. Max gets himself a boiled egg from the buffet and smiles blandly — he has slept well.

He can not talk to Andrew for long, as the latter is due in Roermond for a rehearsal soon. Max does not have to leave until later. The train schedule is consulted and the very best train is selected with care. Then the tenor leaves and Max gets some more to eat. He also fixes some sandwiches for this evening because he will be traveling back to Amsterdam immediately after the performance. He has to sing Telemann in Antwerp tomorrow.

The entire *Harmonische Gottesdienst* is being recorded by the combined BRT/NOS/WDR (the Belgian, Dutch and West German broadcasting companies) for 1981, the Telemann year.

Tomorrow they are doing cantatas 9 and 25, with Sigiswald and Wieland Kuyken and Robert Kohnen, In 1981, every Sunday morning will be enlivened by the broadcasts: whoever is not up in time for the NOS can hear the whole thing later in the morning on the BRT.

Max asks the receptionist how long he may keep his room as he wants to rehearse for Antwerp before he leaves. The girl is very nice about it and has all the other rooms done first so Max can stay until about one. Then he is off to Roermond, which is slightly more citified than Heerlen. He finds a konditorei (the name for the café is German and reminds us how near the border we are) and we have a late lunch and some pie.

The Munsterkerk in Roermond is Late Romanesque and was built early in the thirteenth century as a Cistercian abbey for women. It is built entirely of stone and, apart from the galleries above the aisles (people will sit there tonight: how odd to see legs dangling overhead in a church), the west transept is eye-catching because the proportions deviate so startlingly from the rest of the church, as the result of a nineteenth century restoration by P.J.H. Cuypers. The church is full of passageways and there are some huge wooden statues, some from as early as the fourteenth century. The acoustics are bound to be very different from those in Heerlen.

The most remarkable thing inside is the tomb of Count Gerhard III of Gelre, who died in 1229, and his wife Margaretha of Brabant. It is situated right under the lantern dome which is not only unusual, it also makes things difficult for the orchestra and the soloists who keep having to go around it. Max sits in his place in the crowded church and opens his score.

By seven tonight he will be on the train home, looking through the Telemann on the way. Tomorrow he goes to Antwerp, Tuesday he has a rehearsal with the lutanist Jacques Boogaart for the two recitals they will be recording for the BBC just before Christmas. They have to start now because Max is going away for three weeks. He can teach for two hours on Wednesday, November 26<sup>th</sup>, and be at Schiphol airport by three p.m.; the plane leaves at five for the United States where he will, among other things, be singing in *Messiah*.

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## Turning Professional – The Sixties

After the vocal competition in 's-Hertogenbosch, Max consciously chose a career as a singer. Given his background, that meant that he had to take full financial responsibility for himself from then on. He realized that he could not possibly combine his job with the news and a professional singing career and he had already disappointed his parents by not taking his university degree either. So he was going to have to support himself and that meant accepting every job he was offered from which he could profit financially or in terms of publicity, which means every single job.

He had one major problem to overcome: conveying emotion through his singing. It had been mentioned to him at school; Mrs. Monsma had wanted him to go to Paris. During the critical reviews of the vocal competition, Leo Hanekroot had written in the paper *De Tijd-Maasbode* that “Max van Egmond’s style is as virtuoso as it is mannered. He does not give us one sincere, full sound. He flirts with notes. What he needs to learn is how to sing simply and from the heart.”

Hanekroot went on to show why he was writing with such disapproval about a young newcomer: he thought Wilma Driessen should have won the prize. But there was just a particle of truth in what he said. Max was extremely shy and did not dare share his real emotions with an audience.

On September 19th he gave his first professional recital. His debut was at the Hague Municipal Museum, accompanied by his former schoolmate Jan Wijn and under the aegis of Guus Hoekman and Herman Schey, well-known basses. Admission was thirty cents.

He was highly praised, both for vocal achievement and for his choice of program. He sang “*Tu ch’ ai le penne, Amore*” by

Caccini; the cantata *Dopo tante e tante pene* by Marcello; Handel arias from *Ottone* and *Judas Maccabaeus* and Schubert's "Der Konig in Thule", "Im Fruhling", "Am Grabe Anselmo's" and "Rastlose Liebe"; he also sang lieder by Gounod, Brahms, Julius Rontgen and Richard Strauss.

The audience was given the complete texts, a custom Max still maintains. The reviewers praised his pronunciation of foreign languages, his diction, his coloraturas. The musicality and taste, the things that have become the hallmark of his singing, were already discernible. But temperament was mentioned here too. Max sang Schubert's "Im Fruhling" and "R.F." said in his review in *Het Vaderland* that the song was "symptomatic of the way he used his voice, there being no room as yet for storm and rain, clouds and thunder."

We know that the twenty-three-year-old had seen enough clouds for a lifetime. What he lacked was the facility to convey his feelings. The reasons for this seem clear: the necessity for control during his time in the internment camp and his education. His parents were very Dutch. Outsiders do not get to know that you have feelings. You need to control yourself.

"The impression of being detached is closely connected with the fact that I am phlegmatic. (I think I am the very prototype of a phlegmatic person). Getting over that for the stage is about 80% technique for conveying emotion (the way actors do). The other 20% is a matter of growing up and professional experience. It was during the first few years of my public career that the impression of detachedness (not to be confused with actually being detached) was most in evidence. It was very noticeable around 1959 and there was one person at that time who consistently and relentlessly called it to my attention if I didn't put enough feeling into my performance. That was Jan Bekhof, a colleague at the

news, who had a good pair of ears and came to listen regularly so that he could compare my performances.”

The above is Max’s opinion on the subject. We do not agree. In my view Max was not born phlegmatic but learned to act that way. He was a noisily verbal little boy who would play in the garden, singing at the top of his voice. When the lady next door came in, the five-year-old would shout “Here’s Ina!” According to an aunt of his who lived in the house, he never kept still. That does not sound in the least phlegmatic – and there are plenty of phlegmatic children.

In the meantime Max was working like a fiend. He was a soloist when the Schola Cantorum gave a folk song benefit concert for Unicef. He sang spirituals and a French song from 1615 he had found, “Quiellant la Violette”.

On Boxing Day (December 26th, called Second Christmas Day in The Netherlands) there was another Unicef concert; 1959/60 had been proclaimed a refugee year. They sang Britten’s *Ceremony of Carols* and Max was praised for his interpretation of six songs by Hugo Wolf.

Meanwhile he had been on television for the first time. During the fifties Dutch productions were encouraged and in 1951 the composer Nico Schuyt was commissioned by the city of Amsterdam to write an opera for young people. Max sang in it in 1960. He also sang at a home for the elderly, in the Rotterdam museum Booymans-van Beuningen, and on the radio, for the AVRO, with accompanist Pierre Palla. That recording still exists.

In Boymans-van Beuningen Max sang Handel oratorio arias and works by Gounod and Richard Strauss with falsetto and voix-mixte. He received an ovation.

In December he sang in all six cantatas of Bach’s *Christmas Oratorio* with the Utrecht Student Chorus and Orchestra. This was his first appearance under the direction of Jaap Hillen, who

had succeeded Hans Brandts Buys. The soloists were mentioned by name now and Max was regarded as “promising” by musicologist Wouter Paap.

On December 31, 1959 Max took his leave of the radio news. The editor-in-chief S. Witteboon gave him a testimonial:

“When we selected Mr. van Egmond from among several hundred candidates – he was then only twenty – we were drawn to him mainly by his lovely voice. However, a radio newscaster’s work requires a great deal more than a good voice: general knowledge, a wide range of interests, a good intellect, a flair for languages and the right approach when dealing with unexpected difficulties. We have been pleased to find that he met all these requirements in his work too. ...From a more personal point of view he also leaves us with very pleasant memories. He was congenial in a group, friendly, willing to help, gentle. ...Now that he is leaving to devote himself entirely to the art of singing, he may be sure that he has reaped nothing but esteem and friendship here.”

That New Year’s Eve Max sang an aria from Handel’s *Messiah* on a talk show, accompanied by a pop orchestra. There, in the spotlights, he announced his decision to the whole country. What had at first appeared to be a disadvantage in ’s-Hertogenbosch, the impossibility of remaining anonymous, proved to be thoroughly advantageous now. Max was already “one of us” and the enthusiastic appropriation the Dutch in general accord only to their sports heroes now became the lot of a concert singer for a change. Early in January the daily papers were rhapsodic. Just how much the bravura (not the aria; the announcement) cost him in terms of nervous tension, nobody will ever know. The man who calls himself “pacific-philosophic by nature” is not telling. He had burnt his bridges spectacularly behind him and now he

would have to prove himself, not just to his parents but to everybody.

1960 started where 1959 left off: on the radio. Adolphe Adam's *La Poupée de Neurenberg* was recorded by the VARA. He also sang the *Kreuzstab Cantata* but most of the first three months were taken up by the refugee year already mentioned.

John van 't Hoff, who had been at school with Max and given him piano lessons, was actively engaged in refugee work. Since then he has spent a great deal of his time in developing countries and at the time of writing [1982] he is living and working in Zimbabwe.

John had assembled a group of young people from Het Gooi and they had put together a program with which they travelled around the region, collecting money for the central refugee committee. A number of the young musicians were former schoolmates, some were acquaintances from music school, from the Bach Society. They split up into two groups and one appeared somewhere in Het Gooi every Wednesday night. The day after the VARA recordings they appeared in Weesp and the local newspaper lectured its readers the next morning on the small turnout.

Shortly before, Max had moved to Voorburg, a suburb of The Hague, where his parents now lived. (When he had left the radio news he had also given up his room in Hilversum). From there he wrote John postcards stating precisely what his traveling plans were, his time of arrival and mode of transportation from the station: "and there I will rent a bicycle...." He also gave John a repertoire list, from which the latter could choose from "what is between blue brackets", namely Gounod's *Ave Maria* and *Jesus of Nazareth* and spirituals. The spirituals were preferred. In February the young people sang in the Singer Concert Hall in Laren where Max was well-known. The reviewer considered Max a more and more striking personality and reprimanded the locals for not turning up in sufficient numbers. This period is

described by Hans Geel, whose part in the proceedings consisted of a reading of Paul Gallico's Snow Goose and declaiming *Het Wilhelmus*, the Dutch national anthem:

“Clinge Doorenbosch had written a poem urging people to come and every town had a committee of recommendation. So we had supporters all over and in Bussum we were even treated to a huge cake delivered to Concordia for us – by the way, I don't remember having eaten any; my declamation took half an hour and that was a long time for the others to sit still.... In Laren, where we appeared at the Singer Concert Hall, we were received beforehand by a lady who had been on the board of the Bach Society for years and was used to dispensing hospitality to the singers from abroad who came for the *St. Matthew* Passion on Good Friday and the days before and after; people like Ernst Häfliger and Jozef Traxel. Now we were given a reception consisting of a delicious meal, which we could only half enjoy because of being nervous about the evening performance, all except Max who was a seasoned performer in much more exacting circumstances. We watched him happily savor all the delicacies.

Our performance was quite successful but Max's was certainly the best. He sang spirituals like 'Oh Peter, Go Ring-a dem Bells', 'Deep River' and 'I want to Be Ready'; 'Schlummert ein' from Bach's *Cantata* 82 and a famous Handel arioso. After his appearance in Concordia the Bussumse Courant wrote, on February 2 1960: 'But the star that shone most brightly during the performance was the baritone Max van Egmond. What he sang was obviously the result of good vocal training, although his talent of course remains the most important thing.' After the evening in Singer the Laarder Courant De Bel (of February 23 1960) wrote: 'Naturally the achievements were on different levels. But in the main, the evening was certainly a success.'

Max van Egmond's singing was the best, his lovely voice the most moving in the Negro spirituals'."

John remembers the cake very well: Max was to appear in the first number after intermission but everybody had to wait for it; Max was still eating cake with relish and was in no hurry at all. The "artistic evenings" as they were called netted 2500 guilders. That is not bad, considering that the average price of admission was only one.

In March Max sang in several *St. John Passions* at one of which, in Scheveningen, he remembers having to rush back and forth as he had to sing the recitatives accompanied by the organ from the loft and other parts from the more usual place in front of the choir (at the other end of the church). That was because the portable organ which had been ordered for the Oude Kerk in Scheveningen did not arrive on time.

For the first time there were a lot of reviews – all good, as far as Max was concerned. Judging by the photographs, he is far and away the youngest of the soloists; Han Lefevre singing the Evangelist and David Hollestelle the Christ. He sang his first *St. John* in the Amsterdam Westerkerk that year, doing the arias under Simon C. Jansen. He still does a Passion there every year. Right after the Easter Passion rush, during which he got extra attention in long newspaper articles about his move from the radio news to the professional concert stage, Max gave another radio recital.

On The Queen's Birthday, April 30<sup>th</sup>, a national holiday, Max managed for the first but certainly not the last time to cram two appearances into the same day. In the afternoon he sang two stanzas of the *Wilhelmus*, the extremely wordy Dutch national anthem, which had probably never been sung so intelligibly before, and at night the final refugee year concert took place in Muiden.

On the next national holiday, the fifth of May, Liberation Day, he sang in *Judas Maccabaeus* by Handel. He also auditioned that month for the School Concert Foundation. It had been set up with the praiseworthy intention of bringing secondary school students into contact with classical music. Max sang for the foundation for years and regards it as the best apprenticeship a young singer can have -if you can hold the attention of a hall full of teenagers, you won't have much trouble with adults. Max met pianist Paul Niessing there and was accompanied by him in Max's solo program "Poet and Tone Poet" which he presented for the radio program *Aspects of the Art of Singing*.

Still in May 1960, Max made his first records, for "Glorieklanken", that is, "Sounds of Glory". He classifies them among his youthful sins and will only allow them to be mentioned at all because they are absolutely unavailable. His mother would have agreed with him. When he played her the first one she said: "You aren't a bass yet, by a long way." Still, they have got something special, these youthfully enthusiastic renderings of sacred songs and hymns. Everything is sung in Dutch (a notoriously difficult language to sing in) and is perfectly intelligible. The vocal control is excellent and Max actually does one trill. His voice is still light and boyish, of course.

He sang psalms, set to music by Maitre Pierre among others, Christmas carols including a Dutch version of "In Dulce Jubilo" and, on his very first record, J.S. Bach: a translation of BWV 469, "Ich steh an deiner Krippen hier" from the *Geistliche Lieder*.

Max went abroad to sing too. With his friends, the van der Duys family, he went to Lucerne where he appeared as a soloist in a premiere, *Proverbia Breugheliana*, a cantata by Marinus de Jong. He was also invited to appear at the Lucerne Casino (restaurant) and remembers with revulsion performing in a room

full of people all of whom were eating and some of whom were chatting away. He never did it again.

That year he sang his first Fauré *Requiem*, *Ein Deutsches Requiem* by Brahms, new Purcell repertoire like “Since from my Dear” and Haydn Canzonettas. He worked with accompanist Thom Bollen of the Bach Society, when his mentor Anthon van der Horst got sick just before a recital they were to do together. That was the beginning of a long and fruitful collaboration. Max sang his first *Dichterliebe* by Schumann and GCWvdH, so critical a reviewer a year earlier, was rhapsodic in his praise. Max sang in Anthony Hopkins’ *Three’s a Company* and the reviewers found out he had a dry humor. His talent for understatement and his capacity for reacting quickly in a crisis, already mentioned in his radio news testimonial, led to an incident his family remembers well:

Max was living with his parents in Voorburg at the time. His mother usually answered the phone and when people asked for “your husband” she would ask: “Don’t you mean my son, the singer?” They usually did. “My son, the singer” became proverbial; she was as proud as Punch of him. His diary shows that he was not at home very often, though.

One evening the family (including Max) were sitting at the dinner table when the doorbell rang. It was a friend, who was invited to pull up a chair. “Oh Max, would you get one from upstairs, please?” Up went Max and soon a frightening series of crashes was heard from the staircase, followed by the sound of breaking glass. Everyone got up and rushed into the hall expecting to find Max there seriously injured. No Max. Just a chair, which had gone straight through the pane of glass in the door. They looked for him in the hallway, even on the street: no Max. Surprised and anxious, they went back into the dining room. There he was, calmly spooning up soup. He reacted imperturbably to the cries of indignation. Raising his eyebrows he said: “Is anything wrong?”

Towards the end of that year Max sang *Ich habe genug* in Leiden and both the local and national press were filled with admiration for the emotional interpretation, the depth of feeling, the timbre and the technique. That was the month in which Felix de Nobel asked him to sing with the Dutch Chamber Chorus. Max was willing to try and even went to Berlin with the group, but by January 1961 he had to stop. The large number of rehearsals and performances was incompatible with his career as a soloist, he decided.

He gave a recital that month in a home for the elderly, though; he had to find time for that. His grandparents lived there. On November 29<sup>th</sup> he made a note in his small Success diary: 1.45 p.m., leave for Berlin from Concertgebouw. Take: music, tails, sandwiches and bottle, fruit and knife, toilet articles, book, passport, pyjamas, bathrobe, handkerchiefs, socks. Cards to: cousin Cees, van der Duys, Home. -Just so he wouldn't forget anything.

Back from Berlin, he sang the Schubert *Mass in A* in the Amsterdam Concertgebouw, the first time there for him, and finished the year with Bach's *Christmas Oratorio* in Leiden. On December 27<sup>th</sup> he wrote a New Year's resolution in his diary: call Vaz Dias, the newspaper clipping service.

In 1961 Max decided he could add something to his workload. Aside from voice lessons (two a week), solfège, interpretation lessons with Felix de Nobel and French repertoire with Pierre Bernac, soloists' rehearsals, chorus rehearsals in Naarden, dress rehearsals and performances, aside from increasingly frequent radio recordings and recurrent school concerts, he joined the opera class of the Amsterdam Conservatory for a short space. He did not stay very long.

He sang in Leonard Bernstein's *Trouble in Tahiti*, which was recorded for the radio. He had his first real "passionate" year: nine *St. Johns* and twelve *St. Matthews*. One of the *St. Johns* was

with Dora Lindeman, the soprano he had heard as a child at his first *St. Matthew* in Groningen.

One of the performances that year took place in Enschede and the conductor was Charles de Wolff. There was a long article in the local paper, *Tubantia*, on his innovative interpretation: “He (de Wolff) has liberated the *St. Matthew Passion* from all kinds of concert and sentimental effects that have crept in.” The anonymous reviewer elaborated on this theme in a slightly strange manner: “Thus the chorales were given a pure beauty, not defiled by any kind of human sentiment.” A straightforward approach is equated here with lack of emotion, and by a favorable reviewer! De Wolff’s idea was that the best way to approach the Baroque is to render emotions in the way they did at the time: that is, by using musical conventions and stylistic tropes well understood at the time, rather than nineteenth-century rhetoric which was an entirely different way of indicating emotion. This was, and is, often misunderstood.

In Naarden Max was to sing in the chorus as usual but Laurens Bogtman fell ill; David Hollestelle, who was to do the arias, sang the Christ and Max performed the arias and smaller parts with Peter van der Bilt. It was his first solo appearance with the Dutch Bach Society. A year later he was back in the chorus but from 1963 on he sang the arias almost every year in Naarden until he in turn was given the part of Christ in 1979.

Max gave another recital in the Municipal Museum in The Hague, with Paul Niessing. He sang Haydn canzonettas, *Hebraic Songs* by Ravel and, after the intermission, *Dichterliebe*. A highly analytical review in the *Haags Dagblad* of November 10<sup>th</sup> stated: “Max van Egmond is undoubtedly a highly intelligent singer but (as yet) he lacks the capacity to identify with his interpretation, at least to convey any inner experience of it to his public. Hence my scepticism, reinforced by the impression of complete self-confidence he makes: if Max van Egmond has found his self-assurance in this particular area, he is in danger of

retaining a cold and even mannered style. And that would be a very great pity.”

Max, shuttling between recordings, performances of Hopkins for the School Concerts and what he ironically called “glorious days”, did not dwell on it long. A typical “glorious day” consisted of an orchestra rehearsal in Utrecht in the morning, recording in Hilversum in the afternoon and a dress rehearsal in the Amsterdam Concertgebouw till late at night (on May 30<sup>th</sup>). That was not unusual.

There were all sorts of reasons for accepting so arduous a schedule. An important one was that the fees were not high and Max had to live on them. Independent artists in The Netherlands pay for their own insurance premiums and old age pensions, while salaried persons do not, and they also have to have reserves for when concerts are thin on the ground. No one can foretell when that will happen. Premiums are expensive and sick singers do not get paid. Sometimes replacements give the people they replace a percentage, though.

It is a curious fact that in a country which sets as much store by universal welfare as The Netherlands, the needs of the independent artists like musicians who are not members of an orchestra are largely ignored. These are the very people on whose work international cultural respect for The Netherlands is based.

In June Max auditioned for a committee of the Dutch National Concert Management and was rejected. That was too bad, because this concert management gets a special grant to promote young Dutch artists. It makes it hard for other managers to compete with them.

A few years later, when Max had made a name for himself, they did want him and they were very useful to him then, mainly through their international contacts with the UNAR (Union International de Promotion Artistique), but that came later. Before that, Max had a manager in The Hague. He writes the following about managers:

“I think that the professional intermediary is always in a curious position. Two parties that need one another meet through the intervention of a third, who has to be knowledgeable about both and get along with them, acting in the interests of both. As one would expect, people like that easily get caught in the middle, get criticised by both sides. In music, I really think these intermediaries can be useful, although they are often present when direct negotiations would also have been possible. Like telephone exchanges, their importance lies in providing a central meeting place.

The most important thing for the artist is a manager’s capacity for taking the initiative in promoting the artist’s career. That demands a highly individual approach: every artist has his or her own weaker and stronger sides and of course promotion should be geared to the latter. The manager has to determine: (a) how to build up the artist’s image in the long run (publicity and the media are important here); (b) which markets have not yet been probed for the artist and how to exploit them (but only where there is a good chance of succeeding, so nothing the artist is not ready for); (c) miscellaneous business, relieving the artist (or group) of chores like correspondence and program data, giving advice on financial matters, traveling, hotels, etc.

Naturally, the more time the manager can give to an individual artist, the better all this works, culminating in the ‘private secretary/manager’, which however is less advantageous when it comes to working with choral groups and orchestras and such. For the relationship with them it is useful for the manager to have as many individual artists as possible. The larger offices solve the problem (if they are smart) by using the office as a whole for making contact and keeping in touch with orchestras, etc. and giving each

employee a specific and limited number of artists to work with regularly.

In the case of small (one-person) concert managements, I think they ought to cooperate with one another as much as possible and now I am touching on a delicate subject because, sadly enough, they often abominate each other and think the others are stealing a march on them. This deprives them of the chance of helping one another out. I wish they would think of it in that light.”

That summer, Max worked for the radio news as a substitute. He also started to take Italian lessons and passed his driving test in August. In September, after a well-earned rest, he began to record and perform again; it was becoming routine. He sang in a complete *Messiah* for the first time and will never forget it. After waiting half an hour for the tenor, the conductor decided to start without him. The alto improvised his first recitative “Comfort Ye” but had to skip the aria “Every Valley”. To the relief of all those in the jam-packed church, the tenor, who had been in a minor traffic accident, turned up soon after that. Max remembers it all perfectly, even that the reviews were good in spite of everything. The year ended, as was becoming customary, with several performances of the *Christmas Oratorio*. Max loved the safe, familiar feeling of it.

Towards the end of December a notable event took place in the Concertgebouw. The Dutch Bach Society and the Schola Cantorum sang Bach’s first official work as the cantor of St. Thomas’s in Leipzig, which was first performed during the Christmas services of 1723, in a version in which four choral songs related to Christmas (sung by the Schola Cantorum) were inserted between the texts of the *Magnificat*. In 1730 Bach adapted the piece for more general use and transposed it into D, but without the four Christmas pieces. Dr. van der Horst

transposed them, more or less reconstructing the fourth which Bach had never completed.

This exceptional performance attracted a lot of attention from the press and led to the publication of long articles about pitch (modern orchestras play Baroque music about a semitone higher than it was played then, the pitch used by orchestras having risen from about 415 to 440 cycles in the intervening period). The Schola's performance was also more highly praised than that of the "real" chorus by several reviewers, which led to great tension in the relations between van der Horst and Tine van Willigen-de Lorme, the voice teacher who coached the Schola (and was giving Max private lessons once a week).

Her technical vocal training of the very young singers had led to spectacular results. The exercises Mrs. van Willigen gave her students for placement, right behind the mask, made their voices sound very clear and full, and the sound produced by a handful of sopranos filled the Concertgebouw as though there were dozens of them.

Tine van Willigen-de Lorme taught Max for twenty-five uninterrupted years. When he auditioned for the Schola in 1954 she was one of the three people who took the decision to admit him. Very soon after she started teaching him in the weekly Schola classes, she suggested his coming to her for private lessons. His parents agreed, provided that his marks at school did not suffer.

Mrs. van Willigen went to the Amsterdam Conservatory and took further lessons with Cornelia van Zanten, whose method she later taught. She began her career shortly before the war. She came from an artistic family and the girls sometimes went to the Conservatory, but not with any idea of having a career on the concert stage. Jewish girls of good family were not supposed to do things like that, but she did.



*Tine van Willigen and Max van Egmond*

Her career was promising and she sang many times with the Wagner Society and on the radio. After the war, during which she was spared as a result of her marriage to a Gentile, she wanted to go back to her music. Her marriage went awry and she needed to earn a living for her two little daughters. Her pre-war career had not, however, reached the stage of her having an enormous reputation to fall back on and she did not manage to make a name for herself. According to a number of her students who should know, including Max, she had a wonderful voice and sang beautifully until she was well over sixty. There are various theories about why she failed: she certainly was not very easy to get along with, but temperament can hardly be said to have stood in the way of many great singers. She appears to

have been obstructed right after the war by musicians who had been members of the *Kulturkamer*, a “racially pure” institution set up during the Nazi occupation, and who protected each other during the post-war anti-Nazi period. Mrs. van Willigen’s daughter Maud remembers how bitter her mother was about it. She decided to become a voice teacher instead and quite a number of singers owe their careers to her decision.

Even then, it was no plain sailing; she was not appointed at a conservatory. When she applied in Amsterdam, they could not use her because they already had an exclusively female vocal teaching staff – they wanted a man.

She got a position at the Hilversum Music Lyceum and at a private institute in the neighborhood.

She and Anthon van der Horst, who was only a few years older, were good friends. He had been her teacher at the Conservatory and when he got the idea of founding the Schola he asked her to take charge of the voice training.

She was not an easy teacher. Her judgement was harsh and whoever couldn’t take it, could go. Any praise from her was richly deserved. Max, who was used to this attitude at home, did not mind but there were students who were unable to cope and left.

“Primarily, I stick to my strictly musical assignment”, she told a reporter from the *Bussumse Courant* in November 1955. “I may even be a little old-fashioned in my ideas. I certainly will not allow my students to sing tunes, melodies, right away. I start systematically with breathing exercises, elocution exercises, intervals. And I am demanding. I do not think I make things easy for my students. But I try my best to be patient. I may be exacting but you can not start early enough. Voices should be developed slowly but surely, starting at the bottom and working up and in the direction required by the voice and the character I see before me.”

The character she saw before her in the picture illustrating the article is a heavy-set Dutch boy wearing a jacket and tie: Max

van Egmond, age nineteen. She is sitting at the piano, half-turned to look up at him, with a slightly anxious expression. “She taught a natural, unforced style of singing,” says Max, “with attention to breathing, delivery, pronunciation and countless other details. She was good at expression, too. She sometimes forgot about the aspect of expansion, communicating by both voice and presentation in a larger dimension, to more people.”

Mrs. van Willigen taught from a book by Eldar on elocution and singing. It contains diagrams and explanations of how the vocal organs, the respiratory organs and the vocal cords function anatomically and presents a systematic survey of the types of voices and the differences in register between trained and untrained voices (range). Concepts like resonance, vibrato and the different kinds of Dutch vowels and consonants are discussed.

Respiration is important: when using the technique Mrs. van Willigen taught, the singer is advised occasionally to do the exercises lying down. She did, too. Even when she was quite elderly, her daughters would sometimes find her on the floor doing her breathing exercises. Max was taught to do the same and he passes it on to his students. Not very long ago he got down on the floor in Oberlin and demonstrated to a group of fascinated colleagues how he breathes in, with a weight on his stomach. Very slowly and with complete control, he then allows just enough air to escape to produce the tone he wants.

This “pectoral breathing” (Eldar prefers the term “rib-diaphragm breathing” because the diaphragm is actively involved) “enlarges the chest cavity by expanding the chest and through the activity of the diaphragm. The chest expands both sideways and from front to back... This enlarges the chest cavity in three directions, so that a vast amount of breath can be stored. By gradually regulating the tension of the stomach muscles, a great measure of control over expiration can be achieved.”

Eldar emphasizes the importance of being in good physical condition, of abstaining from alcohol and cigarettes, of preventing colds and the sudden chilling of the “heated larynx” after singing. Then come the exercises: vowels, vowels connected to “easy” consonants (easily connected in speech and singing, that is), getting more difficult gradually, the pure vowels being replaced by diphthongs in the process. The sentences are in very old-fashioned Dutch, adding extra charm to their already quaint meanings: Lili sees the thief, which dear Willie did not surmise; you must walk, the great necessity makes the tired ones feel better, makes fatigue cool quickly, makes death meekly cool – brave meeting feeds hope: a little bit of pure pleasure delights sly youth:

*ie-ie-ie-ie wie-die-niet-ziet and then connect: Lili ziet dien dief dien Willie lief niet ried. Minnie liet dien brief niet zien die Lili grieft. Lili ziet die iris niet.... Tersluiks zag hij slechts de sleutel waarmee hij het slot kon ontsluiten en de slottuin binnengaan. Lopen moet ge ‘t hoge moeten doet de moeden goed zich voelen, doet de moeheid spoedig koelen, doet de dood ootmoedig koel – kloek ontmoeten hoop ook voeden. Een vleugje groot geneugt, verheugt de loze jeugd.*

Mrs. van Willigen taught Max both vocal technique and interpretation and also rehearsed him in new concert repertoire. After a while, an hour a week was insufficient; they needed two.

“She was, in contrast to myself, the prototype of the glamorous artist. She loved the limelight, (both literally and figuratively), success and celebrity,” Max says.

As she did not appear on the stage, her triumphs were those of her students, in which she participated in every sense of the word. Max has the feeling that he was carried away somehow by her enthusiasm about his success; she swept him from peak to pinnacle. For his part, he believes he did not need that. It was far more important to her. Mrs. van Willigen’s daughter Maud

Arkestein concurs. “She saw the extension of her own career in Max. In many respects he was also her child.”

Still, she never got under his guard and had the feeling she had no influence on him. As might be expected, that led to tension, particularly when she disagreed with his teaching methods after he was appointed at the Amsterdam Conservatory. Max thinks his working in “her” field rankled; Maud and other ex-students believe that she was unable to keep her distance, to give him room to go his own way.

In 1979 Max regretfully decided to terminate a quarter of a century’s rewarding collaboration. Mrs. van Willigen was terribly hurt and Max was too. Presumably they would have become reconciled one day if she had not died very suddenly of a heart attack in March 1981. She was an excellent teacher.

1962 started with *Messiah* and a crash. Max sang in Weert on January 14<sup>th</sup>, a considerable distance from home. The next day there was to be a school concert in Doetinchem. Max, who was driving the tiny sixth-hand Renault he had bought after getting his license, went into such a severe skid that his car turned over comple

tely. His head went through the windshield but, miraculously, he only cut his face open. People rushing to help, found him crawling along the side of the road, looking for his glasses. His car was a wreck. (“It was such a cute little car.”)

Max phoned and canceled Doetinchem from the hospital, where they put a large bandage on his face, and then took the train to his parents’ house in Voorburg, where Nelleke was celebrating her twentieth birthday. He reacted to the cries of distress about his accident in his usual laconic way. “Oh, nothing special, just a bandage.” “What about the car?” “Scrap”.

The next day Max made his debut at the Amsterdam Art Club, singing in the Bachzaal, the Conservatory’s concert hall. He took the bandage off just before going on stage. “It was not a great success”, he remembers. One of the biggest daily papers,

Het Parool, thought otherwise. MAX VAN EGMOND: A TALENTED INTERPRETER OF LIEDER, wrote their reviewer Leo Hoost. He quite liked the Purcell songs and English Haydn canzonettas and was wildly enthusiastic about *Der Tambour* by Hugo Wolf, Duparc's *L'invitation au voyage* and about Wolf-Ferrari's *Quattro rispetti* opus 11. Max also sang Ravel's three *Don Quichotte a Dulcinée* songs. His phlegmatic approach, which was sometimes detrimental, now helped him to get through a recital in difficult circumstances and do it so well that the reviewer was prompted to remarks about "the intimate understanding and the supple, bronze euphony" in his voice. Still, the next day he decided to stay in bed.

Max decided that Amsterdam was a more central place to live than the suburb of Voorburg and besides, he wanted to be independent. By way of a twenty-sixth birthday present, he was granted a permit (yes, you need one in Holland) to rent a room in an apartment too big for its owner, in the Jephthastraat. It was in the Multatuli Building, then one of the few (relatively) high-rise buildings in the city. His diary for the day after the move says, somewhat cryptically, that he had to lend his support to a ladies' chorus.

*The Seasons, Creation, Messiah, Elijah*: oratorios galore and, at Passion time in April and May of that year, fifteen *St. Johns*, one in Weert again, for which trip he bought a seventh-hand Volkswagen. He also sang in seventeen *St. Matthews*, among which his first time singing the part of Christ, in Utrecht. Except for the few times the same group performed twice, each performance of these tremendous works was preceded by a full-scale dress rehearsal.

"I wouldn't want to have to do without this part of my work," says Max, about the oratorios. "Particularly working with others: the conductor, the orchestra, the chorus, soloists – it is always a 'social event' that inspires

me. The oratorios are also usually well attended and – in the case of Bach – attract a young and enthusiastic audience.

When you live in an abidingly oratorio-loving country like The Netherlands, foreign customs sometimes astonish you; in Italy I once sang in a *St. Matthew* at Christmas (under Claudio Abbado) and in Belgium the final chord of the *St. John* was drowned out by loud applause and cheering (in contradistinction to the Calvinist North, where respectful silence reigns).”

After a little rest and a lot of preparation in April, Max went to Brussels on May 5<sup>th</sup> to draw lots for his place in the order of participants in the Belgian International Vocal Competition, organized by “The Friends of Mozart”: sixty-nine singers from twenty-seven countries were competing, including seventeen Americans, a Japanese, four Greeks, a Venezuelan and eight Dutch singers, one of whom was Thea Ekker-van der Pas, a friend. Thea and Max wished each other luck; they were to sing on the same afternoon. Later, a reviewer wrote that “the two Dutch contestants prove that vocal teaching is taken very seriously in The Netherlands.” Thea, who had three very small children, was noted as being “a good candidate” by the reviewer, but won no prizes at that time. About Max he wrote: “This serious young man is the one the public will prefer. A name to remember! Both Dutch singers had their work made easier by the most excellent accompaniment of Sonja Anschutz.”

Max wrote down the French for the days of the week in his diary. In the first round Max sang “Jesu der du meine Seele” from Bach’s *Cantata 78*, the aria “Vi ravviso” from *La Sonnambula* by Bellini, the Purcell songs *I’ll sail upon the dogstar* and *An Evening Hymn* and Duparc’s *L’invitation au voyage* and *La Vague et la Cloche*.

In the second round he sang Mozart’s *Abendempfindung, Komm, liebe Zither* and *Warnung*, the aria “Be comforted” from *Judas*

*Maccabaeus* by Handel and a number of arias from Mozart's *The Marriage of Figaro*: Bartolo's "La vendetta", "Se vuol ballare" and "Non piu andrai" from the lead part, and Papageno's "Ein Madchen oder Weibchen" from *The Magic Flute*. He also sang *Lieder*: Schubert's *Im Fruhling* and *Der Schiffer*, Duparc and Ravel, the Flemish composer Pelemans and Purcell: he was admitted to the final round.

On the intervening days, home in The Netherlands, he sang in Handel's *Joshua*, which was recorded for the radio, Cimarosa's *Te Deum*, Dostorga's *Stabat Mater* and the Bach *cantatas 172 and 106* (Gottes Zeit). On the twenty-fifth, the day after the cantatas, he was back in the Brussels Theatre de la Monnaie for the finals.

Max sang "Mein Wandel" from Bach's *Cantata 56*, Papageno's aria "Der Vogelfanger", "Devant la Maison" from Berlioz' *Damnation of Faust* and "Gott sei mir gnadig" from Mendelssohn's *Paulus*.

The finals were broadcast live by the Belgian radio, which could be received in The Netherlands. At the Park Leeuwenberglaan 17 in Voorburg, the radio was in the hall. Jo and Nelleke sat on the stairs or walked up and down, circling the radio tensely. They could not sit still. During the jury's deliberations the suspense became unbearable, then the results were announced: the first prize went to a Finn, Kari Nurmela. The second prize, the "Prix Malibran", amounting to 60,000 francs, was for the Dutch competitor Max van Egmond. There were tears flowing in Voorburg. Max listened to the announcement with a polite smile on his face. No one could see his knees trembling.

"Oegstgeest, May 28 1962

Dear Max,  
my heartiest congratulations on your wonderful second prize. You really earned it, you sang beautifully."

This is how the congratulatory note Thea Ekker sent Max starts. It is the only one he kept, although he received dozens. The papers were full of stories about the newscaster turned singer again and the reviewers too were full of praise for the second laureate of Brussels.

In June he sang his first recital for the Friends of Art Song and in July he sang in Belgium again, in the Kurzaal at Ostend. He was highly impressed by the fact that his *Ich habe genug* was to be followed the next night by the appearance of Gerard Souzay on the very same stage. Max sent his great French colleague flowers and a note (“He even answered!”), because he could not stay and listen. Duty called.

Meanwhile, Ko van Egmond had fallen ill. Since his return from Jakarta, he had been having dizzy spells, cold sweat suddenly breaking out on his forehead. He had internal pains and was admitted to the hospital for observation several times. Nothing was found, but that summer the physicians finally discovered what was wrong: intestinal cancer. He was operated on at once, but it was too late.

He had been in contact with his elder son for quite a while by then and Eddy visited his father in the hospital, without his mother’s knowledge. Ko was told all about his son’s life, but could not discuss it with his wife who still wanted no part of the marriage to Lous. Before his death, however, Ko van Egmond knew that his elder son’s little family was doing well and that his younger son was on the way to a great career. He died on August 15<sup>th</sup>, 1962.

Max, who had been sharing the watch with his mother and sister for several days, was sitting outside the door of his hospital room, reading the papers, after having been turned out of the room by an overly efficient nurse. His father’s death did not come as a surprise but it distressed him greatly.

On the eighteenth, Ko van Egmond was buried in Bosdrift Cemetary in Hilversum. His widow approached from one side,

flanked by Max and Nel. From the other side came Eddy, Lous and their year-and-a-half old daughter Annelou. Jo van Egmond embraced her elder son without a word; she made her peace with the young couple. “My mother’s sorrow at my father’s death impressed me very much,” Max remembers. She was also remorseful about the alienation between the members of the family. In the months that followed the death of her husband she became the perfect grandmother to little Annelou, who was a joy to her.

While Max went from an organ concert in Groningen to a *Coronation Mass* in Gouda, from a series of performances of *Carmina Burana* to a *Creation*, his mother became perilously ill with Hodgkin’s disease.

Max sang the *Lieutenant Kye Suite* by Prokofiev; his mother went into the hospital for treatment and came home briefly. Nel, now twenty, was just about to take her exams to become a physiotherapist and had to cope alone.

On October 25<sup>th</sup>, Max and his accompanist Paul Niessing gave a recital in the Hague Municipal Museum. B.L.K. (now a noted reviewer) wrote a remarkable article in *Het Vaderland*: “A country with vocalists of the highest caliber at its disposal is almost unaware of the principles of Lieder interpretation. And until the tradition is carried on here properly, flee, oh flee, dear singers, to a place where it is alive and well.

In the light of the above, the achievements of Max van Egmond border on the incredible.... van Egmond can sing Schubert on an international level. It is not true that his expression should have more depth. It is there, but perfect delineation is lacking as yet, because the singer is doomed to search independently for an interpretation technique which is commonplace elsewhere. So flee, oh flee, Max van Egmond..... has he not turned the old, worn ‘Standchen’ into a little jewel by his highly personal interpretation?....”

Max sang in Cesar Franck’s *Beatitudes* in Utrecht, an important recital for the Friends of Mozart in Brussels, with the

competition accompanist Sonja Anschutz and Mozart's *Requiem* with Elly Ameling. He sang for the Friends of Art Song again. In December he sang Charpentier's *Te Deum* and five *Christmas Oratorios*. The last performance took place in the Amsterdam Westerkerk on Christmas Day. His mother had been allowed to come home for the Christmas holidays, but on the morning of the twenty-sixth she was far from well. After a slight recovery, she had a sudden relapse and was taken back to the hospital immediately.

On January 3<sup>rd</sup>, she was very weak. Max and Nel stayed in the hospital until late at night, then the nursing staff advised them to go home. It was bitterly cold and slippery and it was difficult to get to the station for the last train to Voorburg. They had just arrived home when the phone rang. Their mother was dying. Taking a taxi, the driver of which was only willing to go because it was an emergency, they slid from side to side on the dark, icy road to The Hague. When they finally got to the hospital, they were too late. Jo van Egmond was dead.

In Bronovo Hospital, the despondent young people were comforted. They were given coffee and allowed to stay a while. When dawn arrived they left, hand in hand. Walking carefully so as not to slip, they reached the station and took the first train back to the empty house in Voorburg.

“My parents did not live to see the international breakthrough in my career. My Mother knew about the Competition in Brussels (and wasn't she proud!) but Munich was after her time. Both my parents died within six months of each other: first my Father (55) and then my Mother (56). I am secretly convinced that, in accordance with the doctrine of psychosomatics, they were both victims of mental tension, disappointments, feelings of guilt and remorse. Their lives had not been exactly easy since the war and 'giving' society three grown children with all the

unexpected consequences was a heavy load for them to bear.

Even now the thought that my parents died so young makes me very unhappy. There would have been so many good things to compensate them for the misery in the years between 1940 and 1960. They could have witnessed their children's development, they could have meant more to each other, after the worst of their cares were over and my father got his pension. But for us, their children, it would also finally have been possible to see and understand our parents, once we had reached the tranquility of adulthood ourselves. Hadn't we (the three children) only really got to know one another after living and working independently? That could have happened with our parents as well. It is so cruel, when everyone in a young family is so different, or preoccupied or timid or rejected, or absent, or there is such an age difference that there is hardly any real contact at all. Does it have to wait until everybody is old and wise enough to react to the others in a normal manner?

In our case, their untimely deaths robbed us of the chance."

Nel stayed in the Park Leeuwenberglaan for a while and went to class, being woken by the kind mother of a school friend who phoned her every morning: "Good morning Nel, time to get up." She had to clean out her parents' house, too. "But every now and again, when it got to be too much, when I thought 'I can't go on', then Max would suddenly appear. Somehow he seemed to know." Max, who sang his first *Belshazzar* at the end of that month, does not have the feeling that he was much help to his sister. When Eddy and Nel had to decide which valuables from their home were to be kept, they had a lot of trouble getting Max to take anything at all. Eventually he accepted two carved wooden Javanese statuettes. They flank the Edison in his living room and no one is allowed to move them.

Max van Egmond did not flee. He retired from the bustling city for a short time, to a “summer house with winter facilities” in Leiderdorp, where it was peaceful. But living in the country turned out to be too inconvenient; he used the legacy from his parents to buy an apartment in the Jephthastraat in Amsterdam, in the same building where he had formerly rented a room. In the years to come, he made a career for himself. His reputation spread both in The Netherlands and abroad. He earned the “astronomical” sum of four hundred guilders (then about \$100) for a recital with accompanist Thom Bollen. He sang Honegger’s *Jeanne d’Arc au Bûcher* with Iskar Aribo conducting. He became a regular soloist in the famous Naarden *St. Matthew*, recorded for the radio at least once a month, and began his continuing practice of singing in the traditional *St. Matthew* in the daytime on Good Friday in Naarden, followed by an evening *St. John* in the Amsterdam Westerkerk. He sang in Paris, at the Institut Néerlandais, went to Essex in England, on tour with Youth and Music. He and the pianist Paul Niessing went to Germany to record for the radio. In Amsterdam Eddy and Lous had a second daughter: Jorijne. He sang what he now calls his “theme song” for the first time: the Handel cantata *Dalla Guerra Amorosa*, “taking arms against love”. At the end of December 1963 he also sang his first concert with the Concertgebouw Orchestra, *Ich habe genug*. The oboe obbligato was to be played by the first oboe, but he got sick and a newcomer took his place: Edo de Waard. 1963 was the year in which Max started singing regularly for the Friends of Art Song. On one of the first occasions, he attracted the attention of an active member of the Friends, Mrs. Mia de Groot, the widow of a painter. She went and introduced herself and a long conversation ensued. She and Max soon became fast friends and still correspond and meet occasionally. Until Max sold his car they always went out for the day together at least once a year. Mrs. de Groot, who is now almost ninety, does not

travel alone. “Max never forgets to send a postcard; he is a loyal friend,” says Mrs. de Groot.

In 1964 Max participated in the Holland Festival, singing early nineteenth century Dutch music. He sang in the Festival of Flanders in Ghent, a Belgian premiere: Benjamin Britten’s *Cantata Misericordium*.

In September he entered the competition in Munich.

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## The Nights Before Christmas

On December 15<sup>th</sup>, 1980, Max arrives home after a three-week tour of the United States. He and his colleagues Edward Parmentier, harpsichord, and Michael Lynn, traverso and recorder, have performed for The Chamber Music Society of St. Cloud, Minnesota. The program included Caccini, Bach and the Dutch composers Jacob van Eyck and Huygens, Purcell and the Telemann cantata *Ihr Volker, hört*.

The concert is repeated on December 2<sup>nd</sup> in Cincinnati and then Max goes to Ann Arbor with Michael and Edward, both of whom teach at the University of Michigan. “Handel’s *Messiah*: Performance and Symposium” is to take place here, directed by Edward Parmentier, who conducts the Collegium Chorus of the University with the Ars Musica ensemble.

The symposium lasts several days, culminating in the performance. There are long discussions on authentic performance practice and about *Messiah* in particular.

The soloists are Emma Kirkby, soprano, René Jacobs, counter-tenor, Marius van Altena, tenor, and Max. Apart from the soprano, the soloists are all Belgian or Dutch. A number of the members of Ars Musica teach at BPI in Oberlin during the summer, so Max feels quite at home. The local radio station, WUOM, records the concert which will be broadcast at a later date by National Public Radio.

After the performance Max goes on to Arkansas and Texas, where he wants to get the last sunshine he is likely to see this year, but a cold wave dashes his hopes.

Max comes home in stages – landing in Berlin first, where he can get over his jet-lag during the weekend, while singing the *Christmas Oratorio* twice with the Staats- und Domchor Berlin, conducted by Christian Grube. On Monday morning the

fifteenth he arrives at Schiphol Airport, Amsterdam. As usual, he looks as though he has just had a shower and a change. Only his red scarf is slightly crumpled – he must have sat on it. He talks about his trip for a few minutes: all the recitals went well, the *Messiah* was good, the discussions were stimulating. In Berlin all went well, except that he changed hotels, considering the first one too expensive.

Friends and relations in America are fine, it was not too cold. Max has brought home a whole squash, for Christmas dinner. He gets home by one p.m., a full hour before he is expected at the Conservatory for the first lesson; plenty of time for lunch and unpacking. There is some paper work to get through for this evening's teachers' meeting, but he can do that during dinner. At nine on Tuesday morning he has an appointment with the lutanist Jacques Boogaart. Their two recitals for the BBC are approaching and of course they have not rehearsed together since Max left for the States on November 26<sup>th</sup>. The amount of spare time Max had there fell short of what he expected, so he spends Monday night, after the teachers' meeting, learning some of the songs. The task BBC producer/pianist Paul Hamburger has set them is not easy. Early music is what he wants, preferably Renaissance: one program of Italian and one of French songs. On the way to Beek, where Max performed with Jan Raas on November 9<sup>th</sup>, he had chosen the French songs from the pile of music books he had selected from his collection. Between the Julia Culp commemorative and Monteverdi he had discussed them with Jacques, they had a few rehearsals and looked through the texts. Jacques is pretty good at Middle French. That the average BBC listener would not understand much of them was not important. The singer needs to know precisely what is meant, for a correct interpretation. In fact, the imperfect French of the British was probably all to the good, perhaps saving the BBC some shocked letters. Explanations during the program had better not be too detailed either – some of these songs are pretty racy.

During this rehearsal Jacques and Max find out that there is still a lot to be done. They agree to go on after Max has finished teaching for the day and continue until very late that night.

Wednesday morning at nine-thirty there is a rehearsal for the *Christmas Oratorio* which will be performed at the Utrecht Vredenburg Music Center on Thursday and the Rotterdam Doelen Hall on Saturday. Saturday's performance will be recorded for broadcasting on Christmas Day.

Wednesday the weather is freezing, but for once the temperature in the Westerkerk, where the rehearsal takes place, is a pleasant surprise. Conductor Charles de Wolff is talking to the tenor Hein Meens and a little later the alto Sylvia Schlüter comes in with her six-year-old daughter, followed by the soprano Regina Werner who has come from Leipzig in the German Democratic Republic, where she lives. While the soloists walk around, warm up, amble up and down, preparations commence for making music. The Polish Chamber Orchestra, reinforced by a few Dutch instrumentalists (whose names do not appear on the program), settle down. De Wolff speaks to them in German and when his instructions become too complicated, they are translated into Polish by a friendly little man with a goatee. De Wolff has found another bar stool to sit on. Did he bring it? It doesn't seem the sort of object that belongs in the church.

When the orchestra, which is seated as close to the middle of the church as possible, starts to play, you can hear what an echo there is. This makes the Westerkerk fairly unsuitable for rehearsals, as almost anything sounds good. The actual performances are going to take place in halls whose acoustics make it possible to hear a pin drop, which means that everybody has to take great pains. The church is used for a lot of rehearsals, though, there being a lack of good accommodation in and around Amsterdam.

The first person to sing is Sylvia Schlüter. The orchestra members tap approvingly on their music stands when she gets up but when she starts to sing, she can hardly be heard at the

back of the church. Most vocalists do not sing at the top of their voices during rehearsal, but the acoustics are partly responsible too. We move up front.

Max listens to the orchestra for a while; he has worked with them before. He sings from twenty past to half past ten and again from five till ten past eleven. Then the tympanist and several other members of the orchestra can leave. At twenty past eleven, Max sings in a trio for three minutes. Then most of the remaining orchestra goes away, the usual procedure. The orchestra is always enabled to rehearse as efficiently as possible, only the continuo having to remain behind to accompany the soloists. The reason is simple: orchestras have collective contracts, soloists do not. They wait.

During the long periods in which he has nothing to sing, Max tries to create some kind of order in the large pile of correspondence that has accumulated while he was in the United States. He seems to need two diaries, a planner and a number of files. Sylvia's daughter, clearly charmed, brings him a drawing which he examines carefully before adding it to his pile of paper with a polite "Thank you". The child goes off happily to make him some more.

By Saturday morning the *Christmas Oratorio* is second nature again. Thursday's performance is fine and going home by train afterwards Max unexpectedly meets Paul O'Dette, the American lutanist, who asks him to think about teaching for a week in Vancouver this summer, between the courses in Oberlin (three weeks) and Ipswich (two). Max is not sure yet. He may want a vacation by then! However, on this Saturday in late December, vacations are not on his mind at all; to Max vacations mean sunshine and Surprising Amsterdam has turned white overnight. Snow. A fairly unusual phenomenon, certainly in December.

We are driven to Rotterdam by Max's German friend Heino who has come to visit for a few days and listen to Bach. After this afternoon's performance he will drive back home and Max and I

will go straight to London, where the recitals for the BBC are to be recorded.

The Doelen Hall is a mass of cables, connecting the radio truck outside to the large concert hall. After the radio rehearsal, at which technicians have to hear the orchestra, soloists and chorus in order to get the balance of the sound right, Max goes into his dressing room, which he shares with tenor Hein Meens. While warming up, Max walks around as usual and glances out the window. What he sees is enough to make him stop in mid-note, for a moment. The city of Rotterdam has had a large pen built between the huge modern concert hall and the adjoining and equally large furniture showroom. A small herd of brown sheep and one lone deer stand there on a muddy patch of grass, enjoying themselves among the exhaust fumes in downtown Rotterdam. Max shakes his head and goes on singing.

After a lovely performance, during which Max's aria "Grosser Herr" in the first cantata moves the audience to audible approval, we all head for Schiphol Airport, which is unusually quiet this Saturday night before Christmas. My family has come to Rotterdam for the performance and so has an elderly friend of Max's, so the number of people to enjoy an evening snack before our plane leaves is considerable. Too bad the food is so awful. We do a certain amount of juggling with bags and briefcases, as Max's things were in the German car and his concert clothing and music are going back to Amsterdam with my husband, but eventually we get everything sorted out and off we go to London.

From the air it is already clear that the world's largest city is wearing its holiday best: colored lights twinkle in the streets and the dark ribbon which is the Thames is spanned by brightly illuminated bridges: Christmas is coming.

Having only hand luggage, we go through Heathrow customs fast and take the tube to Tottenham Court Road, at Oxford Street. We come up to street level less than a minute's walk

from the brand-new YMCA Hotel, which is our destination. The Y is not expensive by London standards, it is right in the middle of the downtown area and has – oh joy – a swimming pool. Max and I have asked for adjacent rooms in the huge building because we are afraid of losing each other – there are no phones in the rooms. Also, we have noticed before that when we ask for two singles, we get put discreetly in a corner somewhere, which is fine as Max can sing without disturbing anyone. He will have to, tonight, not being as well prepared as he would like for tomorrow’s rehearsal with Jacques.

Sunday morning in London. Bacon and eggs, toast and coffee, with the sun shining on Oxford Street. Max, who has spent the night alternately working for two hours and sleeping for one, is looking happy. After breakfast we head for Devonshire Street, where Jacques is staying. They rehearse all morning, after which Max goes back to the Y to work some more, have a nap and a swim. At six we take a cab to Warwick Avenue, where the BBC’s Maida Vale studio is located. The roof of the building is barely above street level, making the former ice rink look as though it had been built for pygmies. The BBC is very pleased with the underground accommodation, as practically no traffic noises penetrate to the sound studios below.

The studio, found after a forced march through a color-coded labyrinth (remember, now, the entrance hall is blue), turns out to be enormous, about the size of a football field. A kind of giant tool rack along one wall contains dozens of microphones. There are three grand pianos pushed into a corner with covers marked “BBC Steinway” and numbers over four hundred; a portable organ is standing next to them, easy to overlook. The other wall is almost completely glass: beyond it lies the control room. Sitting behind the console, which looks like the flight deck of a 747, is a sound engineer, introduced as “Martin”. There is a table in the room too, for Paul Hamburger who is to play an important part in these recording sessions. He arranged

everything with Max, in his capacity as a producer for the classical music department of the BBC. He will produce the two programs with lute, but not the third, in which Max is to be accompanied by a piano. Then Paul, who is also a well-known concert pianist, will be playing.

Jacques has already arrived and is giving his lute time to recover from the change in temperature. Then he and Max get to work. They go through each song before it is recorded, so that Paul can hear its specific qualities. As they work, Paul reads the score. Judging by his stifled giggles, he understands Middle French. A versatile man, Paul Hamburger.

At eight p.m. there is a coffee break, but no coffee. It is Sunday evening and the cafeteria is closed. So we are led over to a huge object before which the sound engineer, who has been operating his complicated equipment with the greatest of ease, stands helpless. Would you like coffee? All right, but the buttons you have to push depend on if you want it with brown or white sugar (or none at all), milk (hot, cold or frothy) or perhaps an artificial sweetener. You can also get chocolate, with or without the above, tea (with frothy milk??), several kinds of soup and lemonade, orange or cherry, but no carbonated drinks. There is, however, a special button at the bottom for tea with lemon. The most confusing thing about the machine is that there is no logical connection to be found between the numbered buttons and the drink one wants. If you could find a particular number that always went with a specific ingredient or temperature there would be some relationship between this devilish device and the human mind. But no: it is an object to be frightened of and it seems that everyone is. It will not take just any coin, either; only certain combinations which, once again, bear no relation to the price of what you might want to drink. Working together and giggling nervously, we finally all manage to get a drink; not the one we wanted, of course. The operation has taken half an hour. Isn't science wonderful?

The important questions during a recording session are always: is the balance between the singer and the instrumentalist right? If not, acoustic baffles are needed, or extra microphones, or even some sound mixing, a job for the technical engineer. Is the sound beautiful enough? Subtleties tend to get lost in transmission. And last but not least, have any mistakes been made? Usually the person to make one is the first to know and if it is audible to others, the performer will stop at once. But sometimes the producer is the one to hear some unevenness, a noise or a mispronunciation. In all these cases, they have to start over. Sometimes they have to take it from the top, but in many cases it is possible to use silences for splicing the tape. The sound engineer we can see is connected to an invisible person elsewhere by way of the speaker system. That is the person manning the tape recorders, one for the main tape and one for corrections. The invisible voice has to note carefully where each part of every song is on the tape so he can put it all together later on. Sometimes, however, a complete retake is preferred. Paul leaves this decision to the performers; he respects their desire to start again, even when it takes longer, because he knows that it can only enhance the quality of the recording. The fact that he is an excellent accompanist also makes working with him a pleasure. Not every producer gives you the chance to replay and comment and even to retake.

When they are ready to start recording, we hear Martin's quiet voice for the first time: "Here's a light" and the red lamps above the doors go on. This is a take.

Jacques starts, Max contorts his face the way he does when starting to sing with no audience around and they start: Sweet Amaryllis, going too far as usual. Paul laughs his head off at the ribald lyrics. When they have finished and the red light is switched off, they listen. Was it all right? Yes, so they go on. After several beautiful takes, Martin whispers to Paul that he wants to tape the "practice round" this time, but Paul says no. It sounds perfect, though. "I am doing fine" says a radiant Max.

Between takes, Martin holds a cryptic conversation with the invisible voice: "I'll zero that other reel" it says. "Right, I'm with you," Martin affirms. "Rolling." "Running," states the voice and Martin gives Jacques and Max their cue: "Here's a light."

The next song is very naughty, Max says. "Un satire cornu" by Gabriel Bataille. He sings it with a straight face, while Paul in the control room is splitting his sides. "Coupez-pas!" After sixteen songs, Paul decrees a break, but not for long. By the next to the last song, fatigue is beginning to show. First Max counts wrong, then Jacques. And the tranquil BBC voice says yet again: "Here's a light".

Max is going to finish up with the drunkard's song: "l'Amant buveur" by Jean-Baptiste Charles. He feels a little helpless, he says, without accompaniment and obviously expends more energy than when he is being accompanied. You can see him working his way into the part he is acting. Paul likes the song but Max is not satisfied with the, first take. Again. And again. Now he is content.

By half past nine it is all over; The recital is on tape and it is good. After a walk and a ride on the underground, we get to Oxford Street and manage to find an open coffee shop serving apple pie. Then back to the Y where Max works on the Italian Renaissance songs for tomorrow, until midnight. At six-thirty the next morning he is at it again. He sits at the little desk with his music propped up on it. He is wearing his leather coat over pyjamas, is swathed in a blanket and his hair is dishevelled. He is blinking behind his glasses and badly needs a shave. But the smile is as charming as ever. Does he want coffee? "Nooooh, I'm all right." At breakfast at nine he turns out to have slept for another hour after all.

We have a little time for shopping and Max carefully compares the prices with those in Amsterdam. He is a good shopper. Then,

off to Broadcasting House in Regent Street, the headquarters of the BBC, which looks like a fortress. It is one of those neoclassical buildings London abounds in and has a heavily guarded entrance on a drafty corner. Max goes to the reception desk under the watchful eyes of at least six bobbies. Yes, he is expected and after a confusing hike we end up in a concert hall which has about 225 seats. It is an amphitheater, with the control room at the top and back, so there will be lots of steps to climb. There will also be less contact between the producer and the performers. Paul can look down at them, but Max and Jacques can not see him.

Aside from a mysterious person with a drill, who manifests himself during a take but can not be found, there is no hitch. The driller does not return, much to the relief of Paul who has gone through this before. The last time, it happened during a live concert by young musicians, a pet project of Paul's. He tells us that this hall will be unusable throughout February and March due to the renovations, but then at least he will have been warned. After lunch in the cafeteria we go to Paul's office a few blocks away, where he and Max rehearse for tomorrow's recital until late afternoon.

The transition from Monteverdi to Reynaldo Hahn is a big one and Max needs a little time to adjust. Paul is pleased with the originality of the program and sometimes sings along out of pure enthusiasm, although he usually has a pencil clamped between his teeth, like most accompanists at a rehearsal.

Max discusses the interpretation of these songs much more extensively with Paul than he usually does with accompanists, for the good reason that Paul teaches Lieder interpretation. He realizes that Max had had less time for preparation than he would have liked and cancels another appointment so they can work a little longer now. Max is very grateful. The more achieved today, the less there will be left for the coming night... In the evening Max goes to the theater. In spite of his overloaded program, he cannot bring himself to visit London without seeing

at least one play; he is too much of a theater lover for that. He has chosen the National Theater, on the South Bank. A great deal has been written about Howard Brenton's new play *The Romans in Britain* and he wants to see it. It is a disappointment, however. It is a heavy-handed political analogy between the Roman occupation almost two thousand years ago and the occupation of Ireland by the British at the beginning of the twentieth century. It is hard to follow, unless you know a great deal about English history of the period, and the nude scenes the newspapers made such a fuss about are not at all shocking to people from Holland – nor to the British, apparently, as their reactions are tepid.

The next morning there is a rehearsal at Paul's home; late Romantic French repertoire including *Chansons grises* by Reynaldo Hahn. Paul's wife Clare offers us lunch, after which the musicians go straight back to work, until three-thirty. Back to the Y for a refreshing swim, after which Max goes into the gym to lift weights for a while. Most of the people in and around the pool (large and almost empty) are rather pale. Max, who has enjoyed a sunny summer in the States and keeps his tan most of the winter, looks noticeably healthy. When he is wearing nothing but trunks you can see how well-developed his shoulders and back muscles are, and what a wide chest span he has.

After the swim we return to Broadcasting House, where Frieze Green is now producing. Around eight, after the first take of "Procession" which has to be done over, Max suddenly goes chalk white. He takes a stool and sits down, acting as though nothing was wrong, but Paul at the piano has noticed and requests a break. Someone gets coffee. "Here's a light".

A little after ten the recording is done. To the Y, to bed and early the next morning home to Amsterdam. Due to the difference in time, we do not land until noon. In the Nieuwe Looiersstraat the turkey is already in the oven; it's vacation, Christmas Eve.

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## Munich, 1964

The thirteenth “Internationaler Musikwettbewerb der Rundfunkanstalten der Bundesrepublik Deutschland” took place from September 2<sup>nd</sup> to 18<sup>th</sup>, 1964, in Munich. All the German broadcasting companies participated – whoever was to win a prize here could count on a lot of publicity.

Max took the train to Munich on the fifth and sang in the first round on the sixth; on the ninth the second round was held and Max once again got through to the finals. He won second prize, with a special mention: “Sonderpreis für Konzertgesang”. A week later he took part in the concert for prize winners with orchestra, followed the next day by a concert with chamber orchestra. Then, simply letting his train ticket to Amsterdam expire, he treated himself to what he describes as “my first flight”. The army Dakota in 1945 does not seem to have made much of an impression. In any case, he felt that he had earned a reward and if he did not give it to himself, nobody would. He was also unwilling to return home dog-tired after the two enervating weeks in Germany, as he had only a week’s grace before the première of *Het Zwarte Blondje* (The Black-Haired Blonde), a comic opera by the contemporary Dutch composer Juriaan Andriessen, written for the School Concert Foundation’s tenth anniversary and due for a highly successful run throughout the secondary school system.

Max now became very busy, even for him. He received a number of invitations from the German broadcasting companies, did two recitals in England and made his first recordings for Telefunken in Hamburg. The timing was perfect, as usual. On November 16<sup>th</sup> and 17<sup>th</sup> he sang the first side of the record in Germany, gave a concert in Wigmore Hall, London, on the evening of the eighteenth and a lunch concert in the Midlands

the next day, then flew back to Hamburg for the rest of the recording, which was Heinrich Schütz's *St. Luke Passion* and *Seven Last Words*, with the Leonhardt Consort and the Monteverdi-Chor Hamburg conducted by Jürgen Jürgens. (A complete discography can be found at the end of this book). The short biography of Max on the sleeve states that it is his "gramophone debut", so obviously the "Sounds of Glory" do not count. He was eager to record, so in the preceding period he had sent tapes to the more important European record companies. At Telefunken the tape had been given to Wolf Erichson, who was responsible for the Early Music series "Das Alte Werk". He was very interested, realizing that Max's voice was just right for recording Baroque. The time was also right, as interest in authentic performance practice was increasing: Leonhardt and Harnoncourt were already at work divesting the music of Bach and his contemporaries of later accretions and instrumentalists like Frans Brüggen were interested.

There were no singers trying to apply Baroque performance practice. As the number of Baroque projects in which he was invited to participate increased, Max developed a more scientific interest in the subject. Up to that time his approach had been mainly intuitive, although he had already started investigating the art of ornamentation; for example by comparing the recordings Frans Brüggen made with the unornamented, printed versions of the music. Max was extremely successful at embellishing in the Baroque fashion, his lyrical bass-baritone being very well suited to the art. Frits van Erven Dorens, a fellow student of Mrs. van Willigen's remembers how jealous he was of that: "She would show us how to do something, try and explain what she wanted to hear. Then you went home and made endless efforts to imitate her; after a long time you would get fairly close to what you were aiming at. Not Max, though. He would think for a minute and then faultlessly reproduce what she wanted." Max's vocal technique had been the focus of

admiration from his first public appearances on. Now he began to theorize on ornamentation and to read about the Baroque. It was not all Baroque. During this period Max sang Ildebrando Pizzetti's *Murder in the Cathedral*, to T.S. Eliot's text and Hindemith's *Requiem For Those We Love* (1946) which has texts by Walt Whitman. He sang Schubert in Vienna; he was the first Dutch singer to perform in the Salzburg "Musikalischer Frühling". He made his first television appearance, a "mini-recital" of about ten minutes, and found out that being recognized on the street makes him uneasy.

In 1966 Telefunken recorded Telemann's complete *Day of Judgement* with Concentus Musicus Wien and conducted by Nikolaus Harnoncourt. Gertraud Landwehr-Herrmann is the soprano, Max's Conservatory colleague Cora Canne Meyer alto and Kurt Equiluz is the tenor. This record won the Grand Prix du Disque and it is the first recording Max made with the ensemble from Vienna which was to become so famous. You can hear what authentic performance practice really means on this recording and the coloratura arias Max sings are among the most beautiful ones he has recorded up to now.

Max became UNAR's "Artist of the Year", which meant that for two years he could expect engagements throughout Europe and South America. He went to a conference of Youth and Music during the Worlds Fair in Montreal and made his first sea voyage since arriving in The Netherlands in 1946, traveling on the "Statendam". He remembers the trip as being heavenly. There was a swimming pool and a sauna on board and he could lie around in the sun and do nothing. It was not a long rest, however. Arriving in New York, the group was loaded onto a bus and conveyed to Montreal, taking in the sights on the way: New York City, Niagara Falls.

In Montreal Max sang the North American premiere of Benjamin Britten's cycle *The Songs and Proverbs of William Blake* (1965). Blake's (1757-1827) proverbs and poems have

been arranged by the tenor Peter Pears so that a recitative-like proverb precedes each song, to which it also refers.

After singing the baritone solo in a rendition of Beethoven's *Ninth Symphony* under the direction of Zubin Mehta, Max left the conference to return home. This first trip to North America had been pleasant. He was impressed by the young Americans' eagerness to learn, their thirst for knowledge. His first impression was confirmed in later years. He enjoys teaching courses and masterclasses anywhere, but most of all in North America.

Back in Europe, Max had a short rest and devoted some time to his sister Nel, now married, and her newborn daughter Stephanie. He then recorded the *St. John Passion* conducted by Harnoncourt, for Telefunken's *Das Alte Werk* series. On this record the soprano and alto solos are consistently sung by boys, as was usual during the Baroque. It was also the first occasion on which the now time-honored combination of Kurt Equiluz as the Evangelist and Max van Egmond as Christ was heard in one of Bach's Passions. On this record Max sings the arias "Betrachte, meine Seel" and "Mein teurer Heiland", in addition to the role of Christ, while Jacques Villisech sings "Eilt, eilt" and the part of Pilate, and Siegfried Schneeweis sings Peter. Originally, Villisech was supposed to sing all the bass arias, but during the recording sessions it was found that two of the three were not so suited to his voice. So Max was given a double role at the last minute.

Max went back to Vienna for Bach's *Peasant Cantata* with Harnoncourt a few months later and while he was there Eddy and Lous had a son. The proud parents took one look at their baby and said: "Max!" and Max he is; Max Eduardszn van Egmond. He is in high school now, and the resemblance is still striking.

In 1968 "the well-balanced career of Max van Egmond" continued. That was the title of an article (From Newscaster to Baritone) in the music magazine *Luister* (Listen) by Barbara L.

Kullberg. The reviewer ascribed his equilibrium to “the tranquility of a predestined life as a singer, which is developing in a well-balanced fashion as the result of a very sensibly set pattern.” According to Ms. Kullberg, the predestination was mainly the result of the fact that Max was “one of the few lucky people to fall into the hands of precisely the right voice teacher for him.” Max certainly agrees that his voice teacher was excellent, but there are more facets to a career than technique and interpretation alone. As stated before, Max denies the “predestination” in so far as he is convinced that he might just as well have chosen some other profession if other people’s ambitions – principally Mrs. van Willigen’s – and of course his unmistakable talent – had not been so strongly focused on singing. He would have liked to finish his sociology studies and would have enjoyed being a journalist, he says. A lot of his friends are very sceptical about this and his sister Nel, referring to what Max calls his phlegmatic nature, which other people consider his difficulty in expressing himself, goes so far as to state: “You have to sing; otherwise you’ll burst.”

Max on his career:

There was that mysterious “drive” toward international fame. If I had no real inclination to be a prima donna and no irresistible need for glamor, then what was it? Well, perhaps (a) perfectionism: if you do a thing, it has to be 100%; (b) the professional slavery: artistic talent just happens to demand the complete commitment of the person involved; (c) being propelled by teachers, friends, relatives; they expect it of me and I must not disappoint them; (d) the public aspect: in this job you are public property and you feel horribly ashamed if you don’t do well.... All this sounds pretty negative for the profession, but that is the way it went and it has certainly led to positive results: without having been pushed, I would not now have achieved the artistic status which gives me enough self-

confidence to make the above statements with a certain measure of nonchalance and objectivity. If I had not grasped the opportunities there were then, I might be saddled with resentment and bitterness now.

Max made more and more records, including the Edison-winning *Songs of the Baroque Era*, Bach's *b-minor Mass* with Harnoncourt and a record with Concentus Musicus including the solo cantata *Laetatus Sum* by Biber. He has this to say about recording:

The work I am doing now is really quite satisfactory and is in accord with my possibilities and ambitions. There is one exception: the promotion (distribution) of my records. The number of recordings I have made is larger than that of comparable artists, but the promotion, distribution, availability, supply, response, reactions and follow-up with more records are a great disappointment to me. I think there are two reasons for this: (a) I have not had enough of a chance (or I have not pushed enough) to record solo recitals with repertoire that really suits me and is also "marketable"; (b) the companies I record for pay far more attention to *making* good records than to *selling* them. [This applies to the situation in the late 1970s. JM.] Almost without exception they seem to neglect promoting solo recitals and when they do, they do not continue long enough. Distribution is also much wider nationally than on an international scale. If I add the fact that making records is so much less satisfying than giving concerts and also that the monetary results are not always what I hoped for, the obvious conclusion is that for me, a recording session is prolonged labor followed by a difficult childhood. Nevertheless I owe a great deal to the contacts with Telefunken via Wolf Erichson.

In the summer of 1968 Max actually considered marriage, but got no further than a short-lived engagement in the fall.

“I was not cut out for conventional married life, with a wife and children, and never achieved more than one short engagement. But my ‘marriage to the muse’ has really almost taken its place and anyway I have met all the friends I made after the age of twenty-five through music.”

Max characteristically goes on to list just who they are; one of the many “Baroque lists” (I call them that because such summings up were common in seventeenth-century literature) which he has sent me. On the subject of “Max in private” and the allied “Stirrings”, Max was very reserved at first and I didn’t understand. It was not until a long time had passed that I began to find out just how much he needed to screen himself from the outside world.

As is usually the case with a famous person, a lot of people want to be near him so as to bask in the sunlight of the respect with which he is treated; Max has made mistakes in this area and confused interest in fame with interest in Max himself. That is always unpleasant and you have to get over it, only for Max that is almost impossible because he can not free himself from past experience – it has made him slightly suspicious. That results in his acting aloof, which is also partly caused by his shyness, often misunderstood. Not many people have the nerve to break through his defenses, which makes him think no one considers him worth it...

Add to this a desperate defense of his “own business”, even where it touches on other people’s and concerns them too, plus the fact that his circle consists mainly of younger, relatively unknown musicians who lay claim to Max in such a way as to force him into shrouding his relationships with others in a cloak of mystery and you have the picture of a highly complicated private life.



*Publicity photographs 1964 (left) and 1969 (right)*

In 1969 Max received his first Edison, for *Songs of the Baroque Era*. He also acquired a new image by changing to contact lenses; the photo on the prize-winning record is the first to show him without glasses. In January he sang in the Concertgebouw with the Ensemble Benedetto Marcello and offered the public all his specific talents at once: he sang Telemann's *Trauermusik eines kunsterfahrenen Kanarienvogels*, better known as the *Canary Cantata*. Mime, dry humor and Baroque singing, what more could they want? Nothing: the audience loved it.

A week later he left for Canada on a tour of Montreal, the city of Quebec, St. John's, New Foundland and Edmonton, after which he went to New York where he made his debut at Carnegie Recital Hall on February 11<sup>th</sup>. He sang Britten's Blake cycle and *Dichterliebe*, among other things, and got rave reviews. He also acquired a fan.

Sandra Doane had come to the concert by accident. Max was still almost unknown in the United States, except among real

Baroque enthusiasts, and few of his records were available. On that snowy night in New York, Sandra, having nothing particular to do, decided on the spur of the moment to go to Max's recital with some friends and "flipped", she says. "Freaked out", as did her friends, one of whom worked for the Village Voice. They encouraged all their musical acquaintances to go to his next recitals in New Jersey and Queens, which was very difficult because the city was under such a thick blanket of snow that the plows did not even try. They might have dumped some of the snow in the river, but what would they do with the rest of the gray stuff? There was almost a state of emergency, as a result of which there was not much of an audience and the critics stayed home.

Sandra Doane is one of the few people willing to reveal her response to Max's voice candidly and completely. What was it that attracted her (and so many others)?

"It has to do with the response to the quality of the voice and I think principally I responded first to his technique combined with his artistry. I have never been one to flip over technique qua technique. I can listen to Joan Sutherland in a state of awe but she doesn't turn me on. Up to that time I really had never heard a man sing with that vocal agility. One of the things he did for an encore, I remember, was a Purcell *Allelujah*, It blew me away... Not just the fact that he could do it but that he could do it with such ease and such understatement. So that everything fit. It wasn't technique to show off pyrotechnics, but technique to emphasize a song – in other words, as it should be; so that you might be aware of it but you don't just go 'Oh my God, listen to what he's doing but you listened to the song and then became aware of the incredible mastery underneath it. Even at that point.... because he has grown so much.... When I heard him this past January [1982, JM] it would have been so easy to be disappointed... I don't trust

recordings. I've heard his recordings over the years, but recordings, I know, can be so doctored.... I kind of sat there in awe. The tone.... I don't know how to explain it technically, what makes it a distinctive sound was still there. The technique was even smoother, if that's possible. The major change was in the depth of interpretation. When you hear something that's that close to perfection... He is not the type that thinks: let's hold this note until we turn blue and bring down the house... I respond very much to the meaning of the material and if the artist can make me feel the song – feel the emotions, then sheer beauty or power of voice doesn't matter and I think that those who are less endowed with sheer voice qua voice are much more inclined to approach with artistry, to look for the meaning... to arouse the emotions, to involve you, and that's a wonderful thing and Max can do that. Combine this with incredible technique and you have the supreme artist... He's grown so incredibly..."

Sandra Doane heard Max sing in 1969, 1971 and 1982. She pinpoints an important aspect of a singer's life and one which is seldom discussed in The Netherlands. Why? Perhaps because the lovers of classical vocal music in our country feel superior to putting emotional, sensual reactions to a voice into words; we leave that to the popular genre. Perhaps it is due to solo singing being interwoven with the oratorio tradition and our Calvinism inhibiting us from interpreting our own emotions (the public's, that is). In any case it seldom occurs that reviewers or the-public-during-intermission admit to the physical excitement some concerts undeniably engender. Tears, yes. Those are admissible, but Sandy Doane's terms: "Freaked out", "flipped", "turned on"? In general the Dutch are not that honest either about, or to, themselves.

Max once received a letter from a Dutch person on the subject: "I am horribly ashamed of myself but am still sending this

letter”, wrote Max’s correspondent, whom he never met. According to the letter, it took a whole bottle of sherry to write it. On the other hand, sometimes it is Max who would like to meet someone in a concert hall who looks intriguing, but the person in question is unlikely to turn up backstage... Once in a while it happens, which Max thinks is fun. That is the way he met Koos Kamphuis in Groningen in 1970, after a *St. Matthew*. He met Koos’s circle of friends and kept in touch. Since Koos has moved to Amsterdam the number of relaxed musical evenings (he is a flautist) has increased and he is now one of the small circle of good friends surrounding Max.

Max has not got much to say on the subject of the sensual aspects of singing and his own effect on people. Yes, he knows, of course, and accepts that the emotional bond between a singer and the public is closer than is the case with instrumentalists.

“There is nothing, no instrument, between you and the public. You stand there, unconcealed,” he says. A Romantic recital in a small hall can lead to public and performer intensely experiencing the musical emotion together and that is a joy to Max because it tells him he has the audience in his grasp, that they understand him. But sometimes his interpretation is not communicated and – stranger still – sometimes he is unaware of how much tension there is. A lot depends on your state of mind, not just the singer’s but the public’s too. In addition, secondary matters are important: setting up trays of cups for intermission can ruin half a concert – doing the dishes afterwards will spoil the rest.

Meanwhile a few new records had appeared in Europe, including Bach’s *Trauerode (Cantata 198)* with Rotraud Hansmann, Helen Watts and Kurt Equiluz and Max’s recording of Handel, Telemann and Bach arias, both with Concerto Amsterdam. Stereo Review wrote:

Max van Egmond is a throwback to an earlier age. His handling of the florid music of the late Baroque is a joy to

the ear and a revelation to the mind and understanding. Such is his magic that Handel, Telemann and Bach all sound alive, urgent and darned near contemporary. He is blessed with a beautiful voice, a bass-baritone (basso cantante is the proper description, I believe), capable of infinite coloring; it is flexible, accurate and of a very masculine and musical character.

Max went to England again and sang first with the King's College Chapel Choir in Cambridge and then at the Henry Wood Promenade Concerts ("The Proms") in London's Royal Albert Hall, a typically British manifestation he had stood in line to hear as a schoolboy. This time he was singing himself, under the direction of Charles Mackerras with the New Philharmonia.

"Now, fourteen years later, I was on the stage myself, even standing next to my idol, Janet Baker. I was very excited to be doing a *b-minor Mass* with her," writes Max.

The Harnoncourt version of the same work had just become available in the United States and was the subject of an extensive debate in High Fidelity Magazine, under the title "Does the Concentus Musicus' Authenticity Make Musical Sense?" YES, wrote Clifford F. Gilmore and cited all the reasons Harnoncourt had given in his own introduction to the record: by approaching the esthetic and the instrumentation of Bach's times as closely as possible, we get as near as we can to his ideal performing conditions. Gilmore admits that modern instruments are improvements, but points out that the balance is better when authentic ones are used. The members of Concentus win his praise for their performance on the difficult Baroque instruments, except for a few awkward passages by the natural horn in the "Quoniam". Harnoncourt's scrupulous research, leading him to use much livelier tempos than "usual", is mentioned with approbation and the articulation of the rapid melismatic passages

by the bass [Max] highly approved. Gilmore says: “This is the only recording I know of that maintains such consistency between soloists, chorus and the instrumental ensemble.” He considers it impossible to compare this performance with other recorded versions, but suspects “that this recording is a harbinger of a Baroque performance style that we will hear more often in the future...”

NO, wrote Paul Henry Lang. We know that no music can be understood without knowledge of authentic performance practice, but this is an example of overzealous antiquarianism, short on musicianship. Harnoncourt’s concept is Romantic, because unrealistic. All right, the author says, the violins are Baroque instruments and maybe the players even take snuff during intermission, but they do not sound good and there are not enough of them. The *b-minor Mass* is not chamber music, even if Bach could not pay many musicians. Lang says the Baroque horn “is afraid of its own shadow” and that “the ‘Quoniam’ is really funny.” [The difficulties with the natural horn]. He is scornful on the subject of boy sopranos and considers it going too far, now that St. Paul is no longer with us, to reject female voices. He also wonders if we shall have to “train tenors to ruin their voices by becoming falsettists or reinstate the practice of castrating some youngsters.” He tells us that for a “perilous undertaking” like an authentic performance, the ensemble must be “of top quality – this is not the case here.” Finally, he pleads for a middle-of-the-road interpretation. The debate is still going on now, more than ten years later.

Max went to Poland. He sang in Rio de Janeiro, a memorable *Messiah* with Sheila Armstrong, Norma Procter, Gerald English and... a Hammond organ continuo! He went to Karlsruhe, to Montreal again, to Vienna and to Milan for the Christmas *St. Matthew*. In that year of innumerable performances and continent-spanning journeys, Max celebrated his tenth anniversary as a professional. He had succeeded.

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## 1980-81

The Christmas vacation is not very long. There is a rehearsal on December 26<sup>th</sup>, for a recital in Utrecht with Ton Koopman on January 4<sup>th</sup>, a New Year's Recital. The Vredenburg Music Center is still wrapped in a school vacation atmosphere and on his way to the dressing room Max meets clowns in the cafeteria and an elephant in the hall. He concludes that he and Ton in the small recital hall are going to have to compete with a circus in the large one.

The recital is sold out, to everyone's satisfaction. Ton plays both the harpsichord and the organ (after intermission) during this concert of pre-1750 music, including Caccini, Frescobaldi and Purcell. It is exciting to hear two first-class musicians work together and everything goes well, except that Ton can not find a suitable seat. He stacks three chairs to achieve the right height. His Canadian student Jehan-François Boucher turns pages for him.

Max spends the beginning of the next week doing little jobs and making piles of things he should not forget: clothing and scores. He is going to the United States for a month. He will fly to New York and then on to Spokane, where Connoisseur Concerts is organising its third annual Northwest Bach Festival.

The flight across the deep-frozen continent proves breathtaking, but the difference in climate is too much. Within a few days Max has a bad case of laryngitis and the first of his four concerts has to be postponed. A local paper writes that van Egmond is participating in the "International Germ Exchange" but Travis Rivers, the music critic who has announced Max's arrival with the headline "The Leader of Lieder is Coming to Town" in the Spokesman-Review (which came out while Max and Ton were

performing in Utrecht), prophesies that Max will recover in time for the next one, and he is right.

Max sings in the Davenport Hotel: Haydn canzonettas and Schubert's *Schwanengesang* with Beverley Biggs, fortepiano (an early piano increasingly in use for early Romantic music; a consistent extension of the use of Baroque instruments for Bach and Handel). He sings in the Unitarian Church with Nancy Zylstra from Seattle. They sing duets and short cantatas. Three days later, in the same church, Max sings Buxtehude, Bach and Telemann with La Petite Bande and traverso player Janet See, and his final concert is in the Cathedral of St. John the Evangelist: the *Mass in F* and three Bach cantatas, including *Ich habe genug* with the Bach Choir and soloists Nancy Zylstra and Elisabeth Moore, alto.

At the end of the Festival Max goes to Seattle with Nancy, where he stays with her and her husband Glenn Lux. Max and Nancy go straight back to work, rehearsing for a recital of Lieder and duets, accompanied by Elisabeth Wright, harpsichord and fortepiano.

Nancy has organised this concert herself, with the help of some friends. Everything is perfect; the acoustics are out of this world, the audience is charming, and the singers do a good job.

Afterwards, there is a cheese and wine party for all. When a few glasses have loosened their tongues (and vocal cords) a little more, Max and Nancy yield to persuasion by the audience, none of which has left, to repeat the spectacular coloratura duet "Quando in Calma" by Handel. Recklessly, they chose a breathtaking tempo and everyone enjoys what follows, the singers most of all.

Max's next destination is Vancouver. He is only taking leave of his Seattle friends for a short time; he will be back. In the meantime he is leaving behind a rather odd guest: a brand-new teddy bear...

Anyone who travels as much as Max van Egmond and meets the same people so often in different places, is going to be asked to

carry packages. Sheet music is too usual even to mention, of course, but tails for a colleague who left them in New York and needs them urgently in Seattle is another matter. This trip has been unique in that respect. In Amsterdam he was given a gorgeous picture book to take to his Vancouver hosts' little boy and in New York he was asked to transport a bear to Hilversum. As the new great-grandmother involved had just finished giving Max some home-made cookies "for your birthday" (three weeks off), he could hardly refuse, but Bear was a considerable size and had to travel to the Northwest before heading for Holland via New York again. Now Nancy can house him while Max goes to Canada.

There is more Telemann to sing in Canada – after all, this IS the Telemann year – and Max sings *Zischet nur*. It is recorded for Canadian radio, CBC. Max is not too pleased with North American practice regarding live recordings of concerts. In The Netherlands the musicians get a fifty percent bonus for a recorded concert: in America "they expect you to jump for joy if they are willing to come." No pay, though. It is one of the few critical comments Max has; he loves America.

The Vancouver Early Music Society's quarterly Musick carries an interview with Max, who has decided to follow Paul O'Dette's suggestion and teach at the Vancouver summer Baroque course for a week. Reporter Ray Nurse wants to know about his musical background and how he came to specialize in Baroque and Max tells him about working with Leonhardt and Harnoncourt, his own deepening interest in ornamentation after listening to Frans Brüggen, and the way in which Max learned to translate the instrumental approach into vocal terms.

On January 26<sup>th</sup> Max leaves Canada for the United States and flies to Spokane for the concert he postponed when he got laryngitis. He also gives a few masterclasses.

"Masterclasses," he writes, "are an American invention, as far as I know. They go perfectly with the mentality of

young American intellectuals or performers: they want to learn. They are thirsty for knowledge, desire self-improvement and have the idea (like everybody else in the world) that people from far away are better than people close to home. So a concert tour of America is always interspersed with masterclasses. The usual pattern is: you arrive, a day or two before the concert, rehearse, perform, and the next day you give a masterclass of several hours for the local young enthusiasts. Then you leave for your next destination. The main difference between teaching your own students at home and teaching a masterclass is, of course, that in the one case you work for years with the same students and in the other you are just a guest and work with people you hardly know, hoping that the concentrated instruction you can give in such a short time will sink in.”

On the twenty-eighth Max is back at Nancy’s in Seattle and on February 1<sup>st</sup> he celebrates his birthday. Somehow people have found out about that – they give him a party and he is struck by their kindness, although he is “not crazy” about official parties. He has a conception of how he ought to behave, “decorum” he calls it, which comes across as more than a little old-fashioned and is often incorrectly interpreted. Of course he is plain shy, too, but that notion is so foreign to the popular image of the international celebrity that most people will not accept it. The next day he and Bear travel back to The Netherlands.

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## Passion Play

The origins of the Passion (from Latin *passio* = suffering) are purely liturgical, that is, part of the church service. It is the story of Christ's martyrdom, according to the gospel of Matthew, Mark, Luke or John, set to music. The dramatization of the Passion began in the early Middle Ages. At first, one singer stood facing the choir, as the narrator: the Evangelist. Later, certain passages were dramatized, for instance the race between Peter and John to see who would reach the grave first. From these small vignettes, initially performed inside the church and later outside, sprang the whole European theater tradition, as the ancient Greek tradition was lost and remained unknown until the Renaissance.

The first passions were sung in Church Latin, in strict accordance with the Roman Catholic service. With the rise of Protestantism, the vernacular came into use. Eventually the Bible story was no longer the sole source – chorales and religious poems were added. An early form was the motet passion, for instance Demantius's *St. John Passion* of 1631 (which was performed in Utrecht during the "observation year").

The best-known passions are by Johann Sebastian Bach. He may have composed four, one after each of the Evangelists, but only two, his *St. John* (probably composed in 1723) and his *St. Matthew* (1729) are extant.

The *St. Matthew* is performed innumerable times during the weeks before Easter in The Netherlands and interest in the earlier and slightly less well-known *St. John* still seems to be growing. The soloists involved have six or seven dizzying weeks, singing in as many as fifteen to twenty performances. The vocal demands are highest on the tenor who sings the Evangelist; the other singers having more time between their

solos. Given the length of the performances (an authentic *St. John* takes about two and a half hours and the *St. Matthew* takes three – traditional performances are considerably longer), sitting still is a problem in itself. Traveling back and forth all the time makes this part of a singer's year extra tiring.

Max wrote the column "Dutch Diary" for the quality newspaper NRC-Handelsblad of April 5, 1980:

"In the past seven days I have given five concerts, spent twelve hours on stage, and rehearsed for six hours. I also worked eight hours on future concerts, gave three make-up lessons, spent six nights in hotels and ate only one meal at home."

But Max dotes on the monumental music. He wrote this about the "Passion cult":

"Nowhere in the world are the two Bach Passions performed so often and so eagerly as in The Netherlands. The fertile ground is composed of (a) our native Calvinism; (b) our excellent choral tradition and the wide choice of orchestras; (c) our international orientation (we are not afraid of using other languages) and finally (d) the recent great popularity of Baroque music with young people. But in other countries the Passions are seen less as religious and more as musical events."

Symbolism plays a major part in Bach's Passions. For example, according to Harnoncourt (in his introduction to the 1965 recordings), the *St. John* is structured like the symmetrical wings of a Baroque palace, grouped around the central chorale, number forty. Jan Kleinbussink, in an equally convincing introduction to the performance of April 9th 1982 in Zutphen, sees the structure, with its central point at chorale forty, as the arms of a cross. The ordering is the same, the symbolism differs and given the subject

of the music, the Passion, Kleinbussink's interpretation seems more plausible. Bach went to great lengths, in our modern view, in his use of numerical symbolism. The number of notes in certain passages agreed with the number of the related verse in the Bible (the earthquake is an example).

Instruments too have meanings of their own. In the *St. John* the instruments accompanying the recitatives by Christ and the other soloists are the same but in the *St. Matthew* Bach reflects His special status in the use of violins solely for His accompaniment. All the other recitatives are accompanied by the continuo, winds or gamba. Only where Christ affirms his humanity, in the "Eli, Eli..." (My God, My God, why hast thou forsaken me?) does the continuo accompany the singer. (Many years later Prokofiev appropriated the idea in a simple fashion in his *Peter and the Wolf*, where each animal in the story has its own instrument.) There are quite a few differences between the structure of the *St. Matthew* and the *St. John*, especially in authentic performance. For the *St. John*, one choir is enough (it sings the chorales and plays the part of soldiers and populace in turn, in the dramatic "turbae") but for an authentic *St. Matthew* Bach explicitly called for a complete double choir in his final version. He placed the choirs (each with its own orchestra) so far apart that a double complement of soloists was necessary if the singers were to hear the continuo. The resonance in the St. Thomas in Leipzig, of which Bach was the cantor and for which this work was composed, was of course a factor determining tone color and tempo. In a church with considerable resonance like St. Thomas's, although it might have had some wooden panelling, notes are connected naturally which would sound distinct from one another in a concert hall.

Selecting the singers is a matter of controversy, as we have seen. Harnoncourt's introduction to the 1965 *St. John* recording is a fiery plea for small choirs. He defends the use of boy sopranos, stating that a boy of thirteen can not "compete with the musical

knowledge of an experienced woman singer” but sings much more naturally and naively. He does not go into the question of whether this is desirable in a solo in which the death of Christ is turned into a spiritual victory, aside from the rather bold statement that a child of that age is “fully capable of ‘understanding this music and performing it with the utmost dedication’”. In 1965 Harnoncourt also believed that “the coloratura passages felt to be so difficult today were managed with facility by every choirboy at that time.” He says that “too much so-called expression, as can so easily arise with operatically trained women singers, spoils the balanced, concerted performance with the solo instruments...” By “so-called expression” he probably means vibrato, otherwise his opinions have changed considerably in fifteen years, witness the Palm Sunday *St. Matthew* in the Amsterdam Concertgebouw in 1981, with the almost vibratoless but otherwise wholly operatic soprano of Roberta Alexander.

Opinions vary on the number of soloists and the kinds of voices to be used for Bach’s Passions. The main question, of course, is whether women’s voices should be used at all. The most authentic approach uses boys and men for all the choral work and for soprano and alto solos. The disadvantage of boys’ voices is their lack of development, the fact that they are often off key and regularly prove unable to handle the material both musically (limited technique – in Bach’s days the boys were drilled regularly in music practice and theory; there were no laws against child labor and there was no compulsory education at a regular school), and emotionally. As for identifying with the text, the knowledge of the Bible and the simple faith which were probably a matter of course for choir boys in Bach’s time, no longer exist in that form. As with instrumentalists, availability is another important factor. Usually, mixed choirs are used both for the *St. John* and the *St. Matthew*: the ripieno choir is usually made up of boys.

The Passion play starts in Paris for Max this year. He leaves Amsterdam on March 4<sup>th</sup> to rehearse for two performances in the St. Etienne du Mont, behind the Panthéon, in the middle of the Latin Quarter, on the fifth and the sixth.

The soloists and the chorus and orchestral ensemble of the Chapelle Royale, conducted by Philippe Herreweghe, are housed about an hour's drive from Paris. There is a pleasant place to rehearse and as the number of musicians at work together is constantly changing, it is a good solution for the first day or so, but by Thursday evening a number of people, including Max, prefer to move to a small hotel in St. Germain, right near the church. Not only is the Rue des Ecoles more fun, an hour's drive after a late performance is a bore in itself.

The St. Etienne is a large church, seating about fourteen hundred people. Last year, when the same group of musicians performed the *St. Matthew*, the church was jam-packed. There were even people standing in the rood loft, a kind of stone pedestrian bridge in the middle of the church; the only one left in Paris we are told. The church dates back to the time of Louis XIII. It is freezing and Max is wearing his "cold" black suit – denim – with pyjamas underneath. There are fewer people at this year's *St. John* than at last year's *St. Matthew* but then there was only one performance. There is no one in the rood loft, but there are people sitting on the altar steps (at the back, from the musicians' vantage point which is a platform in front of the organ) and leaning over from the organ loft more or less upside down, to watch the performance going on below them. An almost full house; pretty good, considering the prices, which are high for Paris.

The performance was organised by the "Institut de Musique et de Danse Ancienne d'Ile de France", which encourages the use of authentic Baroque instruments like these. They are supported financially by the daily *La Croix* in which a review of Thursday's performance appears on Friday. There is a copy of the paper on every seat Friday night. The event is fully covered and

the article contains background information as well. Given the superior performers, it is no wonder the reviewer is enthusiastic but although business sponsorship of art is becoming more commonplace in Europe now that government subsidies are dwindling (the sponsorship is a good thing too or there would soon be no art left), an article in a sponsoring newspaper both advertising and praising, leads to a few raised eyebrows. We are not used to this. Max, reading the story, observes that they have forgotten one of the soloists (Peter Kooy). The others are Barbara Schlick (soprano), René Jacobs (countertenor), Guy de Mey (Evangelist), Martyn Hill (tenor arias) and Max von Egmond (in the announcement) or Max van Egmont (in the program).

The chorus, instrumental ensemble and soloists are curiously grouped: the twenty-three members of the chorus stand behind the instrumentalists against a background of huge organ pipes with the soloists in front, theoretically. Only they have no room. So the Evangelist sits alone, to the conductor's right, next to the continuo. Philippe Herreweghe is conducting with his red pencil and Peter Kooy (Christ) and Max (arias) sit on his left. The other soloists are sitting by a pillar next to the platform that has been erected for the occasion. They are hardly visible and have to climb a few steps every time they rise to sing. Radio France probably has something to do with the grouping too; their microphones are all over the place.

The performance is supposed to begin at half past eight, but people are still looking for seats at that time. Fifteen minutes later, the music starts. This authentic *St. John* is very different from the traditional Romantic ones. There are only twenty instrumentalists and they play Baroque instruments, among which a positive organ. The monumental approach to Bach (a symphony orchestra and a large church organ) is not Herreweghe's style at all. Each of his twenty-three singers has a beautiful voice and the high voices do not dominate as they usually do in large choruses. The transparency of Baroque

music, which Max compares to Brussels lace, is easier to achieve with a small ensemble. The Chapelle Royal ensemble is slightly less famous than Herreweghe's other group, Collegium Vocale Ghent, but is no less marvelous to listen to. Two of the seven string players are playing the viola d'amore as well as their other instrument. It has a great number of strings; six or seven above the bridge and seven or more sympathetic strings below. The lower strings are not bowed, they resonate, which gives the instrument its particular sound quality and its name. The *St. John* has two consecutive sections for two violas d'amore and a lute which is handy, as every time you pick the instrument up, it needs to be tuned. In this way, it only has to be done once and that must have been Bach's reason for this instrumentation.

The positive, a strange-looking object with pipes sprouting from all sides, gives the ensemble an *A* and the performance starts. When Peter Kooy starts to sing, you can see that Max is listening intently, an analytical look in his eye, as though he were going to tell Peter exactly what he thinks of his interpretation. The look is well known at the Conservatory and Peter is an ex-student. Of course Max listens to his other colleagues as well, but not in the same way. After twenty years of Passions, his mind sometimes wanders for a minute, too. Even when he is gazing attentively at the music, he may be elsewhere and in the warmth of the spotlights he sometimes even feels the urge for a cat-nap, but it is too cold for that here. Sitting around in tails or a good suit every night for weeks at Passion-tide, on stage and the cynosure of all eyes, with a score you know by heart and long periods of inactivity, is not always easy.

Some singers join in the chorales, sometimes without even noticing. They learn to absent themselves mentally without the audience becoming aware of it and without ever really forgetting where they are. Although you can move a little or cross your legs from time to time it is not a good idea to become so preoccupied that you act natural enough to bite your nails,

scratch your head or pick your nose. Such things are frowned upon.

After part I, a little over half an hour, there is a short intermission for the musicians. The public is requested not to walk around – even if that were possible in the now packed church – but many people get up for a minute to stretch their legs and unobtrusively rub buttocks already painful from the hard chairs. There is over an hour and a half to go and it has become so cold that Max puts his coat over his shoulders.

The performance goes well and the audience is very pleased with it. The hesitant clapping with which the conductor and soloists were greeted on entering sounded very different from the storm of applause and the “bravo” at the end. Philippe Herreweghe and the soloists, who have wrestled their way past a kind of market stall to the exit, come back to bow and bow again. A man takes the stall away to give them room. The soprano is given flowers, to the sound of “brava”: someone is being precise. All the noise is a new departure for Dutch Passion enthusiasts who are used to silence in church.

On March 17<sup>th</sup> Max sings in the Utrecht Geertekerk with the tenor Harry Geraerts. They are appearing with the Utrecht Baroque Consort again, the people with whom they did *Belshazzar* in September. This program is long and ambitious. The vocal ensemble begins with three parts of a Schütz motet from the 1625 *Cantiones Sacrae*. Then Max sings a Zelenka lament of the prophet Jeremiah, “pro die Mercurii sancto”, followed by Harry, who sings the lament “pro die Jovis sancto” by the same Czech Baroque composer.

Then the first half of the *St. John Passion* by Christoph Demantius is performed. It was written in the middle of the seventeenth century when Demantius was in his sixties. His work is seen as a synthesis of Renaissance and Baroque. The motet passion (a six-part choral work for à cappella choir) was already almost obsolete. It is a bold venture of Jos van

Veldhoven's to present this piece during an already difficult concert. The chorus has had to work hard at it and some of the members are not sure it is going to work. But it does and during intermission enthusiasts from the audience engage the chorus members in long technical discussions about it.

After coffee, more Demantius à cappella, two more *Lamentations of Jeremiah* sung by Max and Harry and finally the last two parts of the Schütz motet with which the program started. The second half is a mirror image of the first, a nice idea. When Jos van Veldhoven comes in after the *Lamentations* to conduct Schütz, he has already raised his arms when he realises that he has no score. Calmly he lowers his arms, walks to the dressing room and returns with the music. He is greeted by applause, which he accepts smilingly. The episode releases tension the chorus had not even known they were under and they cheerfully sing the Schütz. A beautiful concert. It is almost half past eleven before the organist can start dismantling his lovely Flentrop portative and everyone is tired but satisfied.

On March 29<sup>th</sup>, Max sings his first *St. Matthew* of the season. He sings the role of Christ in the Amsterdam Westerkerk. By tradition, this performance is free, presented as part of the Sunday services. The service isn't to start until four, but by quarter past three there is a long line of people on the Westermarkt, in the heart of the inner city. Luckily the weather is fine.

Just after four the service in the crowded church begins. We are welcomed by the elder in charge of the music, the organ plays, there is a short prayer and then, alas, a hymn. The contrast between *Hymn 177*, bravely but uncertainly sung by a group of church-goers, and the opening chorale of the *St. Matthew* (Kommt ihn Töchter, helft mir klagen) is excruciating.

Jan Pasveer is directing an incidental ensemble composed of the Zaans Cantata Choir and orchestra, the Westerkerk choir (of all of which he is the regular conductor) and a Bach orchestra. The

other soloists are Marius van Altena (tenor), the Americans Howard Crook (tenor) and Charles van Tassel (bass), both of whom live in The Netherlands, and the Dutch singers Jitske Steendam (soprano) and Jard van Nes (alto). No boy soprano, no countertenor, but a small ensemble and a positive organ plus modern instruments. Max likes Jan Pasveer's compromise: he makes light, transparent music with the modern means available to him.

By half past five, part I is finished. The pigeons, which have occasionally been flying around in the church during the service, listen to the final chorale, sitting on the organ pipes above the doors. The program contains a request to the audience to wait until the soloists and the choir members have gone before leaving. "We would not want them to catch cold by the drafty doors." So everyone sits still, possibly reading the other request in the program, to be generous when leaving the church: only then will it remain possible to keep this *St. Matthew* free; contradictory, but true.

Part II starts at half past seven, after plenty of time for a meal. Marius van Altena, who seems to be getting laryngitis, sings as well as in the afternoon, but it obviously takes an effort. Before we get to Bach, however, an elder has announced that if an offering is to be of any use it should really be an offering. "And that is all I am going to say about it..." People look uncomfortable and given the large number of young people in the church, I am not surprised that the collection is small. You pay thirty guilders for the Naarden performance, which many members of the audience here are unlikely to have. Free performances fulfill an obvious need and it might be better to press for subsidies than to harangue impecunious Bach-lovers....

Now that the first *St. Matthew* has taken place, others follow and Passion's slaves rush to and fro. There is a *St. John* in Haarlem a few days later, in which Marius van Altena takes part. Now he really sounds ill. The soprano is Marjanne Kweksilber, an ex-

student of Max's. She sings beautifully, even her aria "Ich folge dir gleichfalls mit freudigen Schritten", although the flautist makes it hard for her. He makes several slips, of which he is horribly conscious, and later spends the entire intermission practicing their second "duet", which goes much better.

On the following Sunday the first *St. Matthew* in the series conducted by Charles de Wolff is performed. The musicians have to go all the way down to Zeeland and they leave at eight a.m. to get to Aardenberg on time, taking the ferry. Max is looking forward to a sunny crossing, but the weather is cold and raw. He gets home late that night and has only just enough time to prepare Monday's lessons. On Monday there is also a rehearsal for Tuesday's *St. John* in Utrecht, with the USKO, the Utrecht Student Chorus and Orchestra, which takes place at the Aloysiuskerk, a lovely round church a considerable distance from the center of town. Max knows he can get there by tramline 3 from the station so, being used to Amsterdam where the station is always the terminal point, he gets into the first 3 that comes along. Halfway to Zuylen he discovers his mistake and alights, hailing a god-sent taxi that just happens to come by. He arrives at the church with about four minutes to spare. It is so overcrowded he has trouble being admitted; the church can officially hold some seven hundred people; at the moment there are about a thousand. Folding chairs are brought for the elderly; young people are sitting on the floor at the front and there is still a crowd at the door. Some music lovers have to be turned away. Many of the soloists are old friends. Harry Geraerts sings the Evangelist beautifully and the bass Hans Zomer, at whose house Max gave a recital in October, is doing the arias. He has a bad cold, which no one can hear before intermission. Hans is engaged in the well-known struggle between a singer and a cold; cancel and start a panic or sing and force your voice. He sings. The members of the USKO are wearing teddy-bear badges on their blazers, the portrait of their mascot, a Pooh-like creature

called Bas (Dutch diminutive of Sebastian, also meaning bass, but he is a tenor, they tell me). He watches the proceedings from between the bars of the rood screen where he has been clamped, looking benign in his tails. The Utrecht students cannot make music without Bas around.

Talking with Max during intermission, I tell him that I am enjoying the way he sings the role of Christ, but that I still prefer to hear him sing the arias, as he did in Paris. He consoles me by saying he will sing the arias again in Groningen next week and “that is quite soon”. I get my wish sooner than that, however, because the difficult aria “Eilt, ihr angefocht’nen Seelen” demands too much of Hans Zomer’s sore throat. He can not reach the highest notes and has to sing them an octave lower. Afterwards he asks Max to take over his next aria and quietly leaves the stage. He will have to cancel the next two of the eighteen Passions booked for this season. And Max rises again after the dramatic “Es ist vollbracht” to sing “Mein teurer Heiland” which is addressed to Christ: “Du kannst vor Schmerzen zwar nichts sagen” (You can not speak for pain), which is a little strange.

The next *St. John* is in Zutphen and Max has only one rehearsal, on the afternoon of the performance. The weather is wonderful; the first real spring day, warm and sunny. The rehearsal does not take too long and after the train trip Max is glad to get outside for a little. We find a seat at a sidewalk cafe (not so easy; everyone in Zutphen has the same idea) and bask in the sunshine. When the waiter comes Max orders tea. “No tea,” the man decrees. The café has silver teapots and he is not about to risk bringing them outside.

We are so astounded that we meekly order coffee instead, wondering whether we look like thieves, and it is hours before we realize that the tea could have been poured inside.... Then back we go to the Hanzehof where the concert hall is. The weather is still so pleasant that the outside doors are open and

some hikers, hearing the music, stand in the doorway still wearing their packs, quietly enjoying themselves. After a rehearsal just long enough to try out all the voices and instruments and make adjustments in the balance (the acoustics are good), there is still an hour left for having dinner. Max has been told that the station has a good restaurant and it is close by. He decides to order fish (a light meal is indicated) and some salad. Max, a bit of a food faddist, is worried that he has not yet had his allotted portion of greens today. Nor does he get them. His fish comes, the salad is requested again. And once more. It is not Max's day for restaurants. The waiter is so slow bringing the bill that Max becomes restive and gets up. Then the man comes. Still, we need to walk fast to get to the hall in time. Luckily Max is already dressed for the performance, except for having to change his jacket. With five minutes to spare, he goes to his dressing room to warm up.

This is to be an authentic performance, with the Collegium Musora chorus and the instrumental ensemble Florilegium Musicum Max worked with recently in Deventer. There is a new member: a young American playing an oboe da caccia – an eighteenth-century “hunting” instrument made by Eichentopf of Leipzig. The instrument maker was a member of both the woodworkers and the metalworkers guild and that is why this curved wooden oboe has a flaring brass bell. The bell is said to have been placed under the right elbow, while playing on horseback, and as metal is shiny, the inside of the bell was painted black to avoid having the horse and rider behind the player blinded by reflected sunlight.

The concert hall is very hot, in spite of the fact that there are no more than three hundred people in the audience. Why so few? This evening's performance, arranged well in advance, now turns out to coincide with a unique *Magic Flute* in the large hall next door. Not only will the small number of people lead to a deficit this evening, subsidies too are granted on the basis of numbers...

The performance is very good indeed, in spite of these problems. The heat in the hall does wonders for the early instruments; they sound great. A pity the stage is so small that the soloists have to climb over one another to get to their places when singing. Again, their voices are not adversely affected by the special conditions and the audience is rightly appreciative. They have to convey this, at the end, in a special way, as they are requested to rise before the final chorale and not to applaud in connection with the nature of the work. Zutphen is not like Paris. It is difficult to stand silent, eye in eye with the musicians, but by just standing there, quietly, after the final chord has died away, the public shows its appreciation. And then, drinks and a late train back to Amsterdam.

On Friday Max makes up the lessons he missed on Thursday and has the weekend “off”. That is, he goes shopping, does household chores, gets some exercise. He can work his way through the mail he did not have time for in the various trains, make endless phone calls about future concerts, consult with his travel agency and get his bookkeeping organized enough so that Theo Geerlings, who helps him with it, can carry on. He has time to talk to friends and even to sleep late. He owes the luxurious weekend to a mistake made months ago when the outgoing board of a Rotterdam chorus failed to pass on a list of engagements to the new members. The result was a double contract, so Max is not singing the *St. Matthew* in Rotterdam for the first time in many years. The new board, innocent of the error, was so shocked they gave him a long-term contract at once, but this year he has Sunday and Monday off. Then come the *St. Matthews* in Groningen, conducted by Charles de Wolff, followed by the three-day Naarden engagement, under the same conductor, which includes the well-known Good Friday performance. On Tuesday, the first night of this final stretch, Max sings live in Groningen, while Dutch television broadcasts

a 1979 video-taped performance from Naarden with the same conductor and many of the same soloists.

When I started going to the Passions during the “observation year” Max told me I would only have to go to Naarden, as the performances in Groningen would be “the same”. Later I found that the orchestra, the chorus and even some of the soloists differ, while Max is doing the arias in Groningen and the Christ part in Naarden. “The same” clearly means the conductor to him.

By Wednesday’s final Groningen *St. Matthew*, Charles de Wolff and most of the soloists have had quite a tiring time of it. After the performances already sung, they took a three-hour train trip to The Hague today, to rehearse with the Residentie Orchestra which will be playing in Naarden. Then, three more hours in the train back to Groningen for the evening’s work.

Max sings well and so does Kurt Equiluz, who can hardly be seen because he is sitting to one side of the stage. He can be heard, though, and that is the main thing. Equiluz also sang in the *St. Matthew* in the Amsterdam Concertgebouw on Palm Sunday. He is the only Baroque specialist left among the soloists working there with Nikolaus Harnoncourt, who was conducting. Harnoncourt is still looking for other types of voices among his soloists and seems to be unsuccessful as they are different every year. Not all the reviewers are pleased with the mixture of styles resulting from his quest: last week’s *St. Matthew* provoked one of them into stating that you can never tell with Harnoncourt; perhaps he will end up with Mendelssohn....

All the switching around during the Passions between *St. John* and *St. Matthew* on the one hand and arias and Christ role on the other sometimes leads to confusion, especially if a soloist daydreams for a minute. Hans Zomer once panicked for a moment just before the passage about the sword that goes back into its sheath (which occurs in different forms in both passions)

and thought “Where am I?” Of course this was before and not during his solo. Max says it has never happened to him, although he did once prepare to get up and sing one of the Christ recitatives when he was doing the arias. It is not surprising. After Groningen comes Naarden, where the musicians go on Thursday. They rehearse during the day and perform at night. Then the Good Friday *St. Matthew*, with the whole town center closed to traffic, policemen wearing the traditional white gloves directing the cars where to park and the cafés offering “Bach lunches” between part I and part II. You have to book tables well in advance and more optimistic souls bring baskets of food and thermos bottles for a picnic, which does not always get rained out.

That evening Max sings again, in the Amsterdam Westerkerk, where he is doing his second *St. Matthew* this year (and his second of the day). Just how many passions Max has sung is unknown to him, so we decide to figure it out. On March 24<sup>th</sup>, 1982, at the beginning of the next Passion-tide, he will sing his one hundred and fiftieth *St. John* in the Haarlem Concertgebouw and on that Good Friday his two hundred and fiftieth *St. Matthew* in Naarden, with his “own” Dutch Bach Society, conducted by Charles de Wolff.

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## The Early Seventies

The Seventies began promisingly for Max. In January 1970 he sang Schubert in the Kleine Zaal (the small concert hall of the Concertgebouw) with accompanist Irwin Gage. His interpretation was superb and even Mrs. van Willigen was delighted. She finally conceded that he could convey emotion to the public well enough to satisfy her.

In April of that year he went to South America for the second time. He kept a diary:

April 21, 1970. Final preparations for the big trip, a little panicky (too late for the barber). First stage, a delay. Managed to make connection anyway (BEA London to Lisbon DOES give you a meal, luckily). Am still calm and not pessimistic.

April 22. Safely in Recife. Grande Hotel we had planned has no vacancy; back to Hotel Guarrarapes again (very noisy, no air conditioning and terribly expensive). Concert in lovely Baroque church, small but attentive audience.

April 23. Today's concert (in San Salvador) cancelled so we spend day in Recife. We experience tropical rain and find that phoning (international lines anyway) is almost impossible. I send a registered letter, an express letter and a telegram. We have to do a lot of improvising.

April 24. We fly to Brasilia and are searched thoroughly. This is a hyper-modern dream city, with no character as yet. We perform in a modern hall (copy of Montreal) for a small, enthusiastic audience that does not know how to behave. A *terribly* clumsy announcer tries to turn this into a live broadcast. The change in the program leads to a lot of trouble.

Sao Paulo, Curitiba, San Paolo again and San Salvador, where “everyone is literally or figuratively illiterate.”

Max, who seldom gets angry, writes: “Everyone is slow, careless or lazy and sometimes corrupt. A European can not live here without having a breakdown.”

Things were very badly organized for the tour and the Dutchmen seldom knew where they were expected or at what time. That meant a lot of extra traveling, always by air, which was expensive and tiring.

They they went on to Buenos Aires, where the list of concerts bore no resemblance to what they had been offered: no other appearance at all in Argentina, the number of concerts to be given was reduced to three. That made seven counting Brazil, although at least ten had been promised. The manager said he would pay them for the three canceled concerts anyway and so they were able to leave a week early. In the meantime they unexpectedly got ten days off in Buenos Aires and Max, who is always complaining about his lack of time off, wrote: “We have to find something to do until May 12<sup>th</sup>, the next concert is not until then.” With the help of the local manager (who drove them around town with his family and offered them a boat ride) they did. They were received kindly at the Embassy, went to the opera and bought presents. Out of sheer boredom, Max went to an amusement park (“a roller coaster = horrors!”), read philosophy and saw a movie. On the eleventh he and his accompanist Rinus Groot traveled to Montevideo, Uruguay, and on the twelfth he was, thank heavens, allowed to sing again: “An important day, for the first time in ages.” They appeared in a fairly large opera theater and Max enjoyed using his voice in such a large hall – the acoustics were good. The recital was recorded without their being consulted.

Back to Buenos Aires and then La Paz. Even though it is located at an altitude of 13,000 feet, breathing was no problem. “La Paz

is quaint; full of Indians: full of colorful street vendors and crooked little streets.” After an “unforgettable trip across Lake Titicaca”, a visit to the zoo and recitals in Bogota and Medellin in Colombia and Honduras, where the concert was canceled after the first half due to a power failure, they were ready to go home. However, their flight had been moved up an hour without warning, so they missed it and had to wait a day. They went to a concert, which was awful. Max finished the diary with the underlined sentence: “This is the noisy continent”.

The next day they really did leave, but changing planes in Miami they forgot the different time zone. “Luckily someone asked us what time it was, so we woke up five minutes before it was too late.” They caught their plane and there was so much room that they could stretch out. “All’s well that ends well”, wrote Max. Arriving at Schiphol, they found out that their suitcases were not on the aircraft.

Richer by the experience and otherwise poorer, Max went back to work in The Netherlands. The proceeds of the tour did not nearly cover expenses.

Max gave his last recital of the season on July 11<sup>th</sup>. He sang Purcell’s *Evening Hymn* and Michielsen’s “Hohe den Herrn” to a mostly attentive audience in Santpoort. One person was not giving his whole mind to the music, though. He was a tenor, one of the group of fanatical followers of the Harnoncourt-Leonhardt line. Ton Koopman had asked him to participate in an authentic *St. John* and the young singer was hesitant about it. He needed to know more about the Baroque and wanted lessons. Ton advised him to talk to Max and, though he was a little frightened, he went to see Max during intermission in Santpoort. “Will you give me lessons?” Max was not sure. He had never had a student and was uncertain whether he could teach. What about asking Mrs. van Willigen? The suggestion was rejected.

“Well then”, Max decided, “come and talk to me again after the vacation. I’ll think about it.”

In August the tenor went to the Jephthastraat and a long discussion about vibrato ensued. He had some intriguing ideas.... Max was interested and decided to try. By the time he went home, Harry Geraerts had become Max’s first student.

Max sang the role of the Speaker in Mozart’s *Magic Flute* with the Nederlandse Opera and enjoyed himself immensely. He sang at the twenty-fifth anniversary celebration of the Groningen Bach Society, whose conductor had invited Concentus Musicus to come to The Netherlands for the first time and play for the occasion. Busloads of conservatory students from all over flocked to Groningen and were wildly enthusiastic about the concert, which included Bach’s *Magnificat*, the first piece the group had played in public, a quarter of a century earlier. There were three encores and Max was tired. He was driven home by Harry Geraerts and his friends, who had come to listen.

In the car they opened fire on him. What about the singers in authentic Baroque performance? How did they adjust to the lower pitch? How did they get rid of the vibrato? If Max produced a *mesa di voce* (a sustained vocal tone with a swell in the middle) did the vibrato increase with the swell? And should it? Weren’t vocalists far behind instrumentalists in studying theory? Max was startled. He realized that he had not taken much interest in the theory but had just used his intuition. He had read a lot about ornamentation but could not possibly answer such searching questions as were being put to him now. He concluded that he had better get to work on it. The next morning he called Gustav Leonhardt and talked about the adjustment to the lower-pitched early instruments. “That just happens; a singer does it automatically.” said Leonhardt. The matter of vibrato was much more complicated and it was necessary for Max to develop a special technique to gain complete control over his vibrato so that he can use it to add

color as desired. He has taught the technique to his students and also to colleagues, for example Elly Ameling, when they recorded Huygens' *Pathodia Sacra et Profana*.

"The attack in the car" was a turning point for Max, for which he is grateful. He feels he has learned a lot about vocal technique since those critical and stimulating questions were put to him, but Mrs. van Willigen was not pleased. She saw that Max had finally arrived at the point where he could convey emotion to an audience and was afraid Baroque technique would undo his progress.

The confusion between conveying emotion and the manner in which it is conveyed has been discussed earlier in this book. During the Romantic period the singer's entire personality was brought to bear on inundating the audience with the interpreter's emotions, which was often achieved with fiercely Teutonic vigor. In the preceding Age of Reason, however, ornaments, each of which had a particular significance, were used to convey emotion to the audience. To quote Marshall McLuhan, "The medium is the message." Of course not everyone had access to this message; although they are sometimes simplistically classified as "happy" or "sad", there are a great many embellishments about which you need to know something in order to interpret and appreciate them fully, as in eighteenth-century discourse. The rhetoric is precisely parallel to the stylized, well-considered poetic compositions of the times. During the Romantic period, when the poet allowed his/her tears to fall freely among the irregular verse forms and despairing cries, the "artificial" precision of the preceding age was considered insincere because it was "not natural". There are probably still many people who suspect the authors of elegies on the death of a child, perfectly constructed within the confines of a complicated rhyme scheme, of having been heartless, whereas the same poets' diaries do not allow of a moment's doubt as to their sincere grief. The artist, however, expresses him or herself within the framework of contemporary conventions. In the

Baroque, tears (and passion) were translated into stylistic structures and the appeal of this rhetoric, the code of the period, for Max van Egmond is very understandable.

Max has, however, always refused to be pigeonholed. From the beginning of his career he has also sung Romantic and modern repertoire and although, like everybody else, he has had periods in which his voice was less than perfect, the past twenty years' recordings do not indicate that the Baroque style has had a bad influence on his interpretation of later music. It is interesting to note that remarks to that effect are usually made by people who are sceptical about authentic performances anyway.

In January 1971 Max recorded the Bach cantatas 7,8, 9 and 10 with the Leonhardt Consort. These are the first recordings on which he consciously limits his vibrato and he does not think the sound is always full enough yet. Still, number 8 "Liebster Gott, wenn werd ich sterben" contains one of his most beautiful arias, "Doch weichet, ihr tollen vergeblichen Sorgen" with Frans Brüngen playing traverso.

In February he went to Montreal with accompanist Rinus Groot, to sing for The Ladies Morning Musical Club again and to record for the CBC. Sandra Doane came up from New York by bus for the recital. That was quite an undertaking because not only does the trip take hours under the best of circumstances, the weather conditions were terrible that day too. There were about three feet of snow in Montreal, even worse than when Sandra had heard Max in New York two years previously. The taxi she took from the station appeared to be driving through tunnels of it... "And that is how" Sandra says, "Max got his name." His name??

Max has a fairly bad memory for names and when Sandra arrived backstage in Montreal with a bunch of tulips (after a two-year gap) she said "I bet you've forgotten my name." "Ummm, I'll call you 'Tulip Girl' " was the tactful reply. "Then

I'll call you 'Snow Warlock' ” said Sandra, and 'Snow Warlock' he has remained. They never met between 1971 and 1982 although by exchanging letters and tapes “we know more about each other than about a lot of people around us,” as Max puts it. But in January Sandra was finally to hear him sing again. He was to make his Lincoln Center debut with lutanist Paul O'Dette, with whom he was staying, about half an hour's flight from New York City. On the day of the concert the weather was so bad that not one plane could land at La Guardia and six hundred people, including some important reviewers, were sent home. A few days later Max and Paul gave a concert anyway, at St. John the Divine, but it was not the same. Sandra came though, needless to say.

Back in 1971 Max did not know how prophetic his nickname was to be but he was touched by the arrival of so loyal a fan and asked her to breakfast on the twenty-sixth, before the CBC recording session. By that time he had caught a cold and that evening, after recording, he felt so ill that he canceled his concerts in Ottawa and flew back to Amsterdam with “the worst case of laryngitis I have ever had” and says he spent two weeks in bed. It may have seemed like two weeks, but on March 6<sup>th</sup> he was singing again, although his voice had by no means perfectly recovered. A few days later he went to The Hague to consult Dr. van Deirse, the ear, nose and throat specialist who works with singers and who prescribed the use of an inhaler containing a mixture of air and antibiotics for a week. Then quiet for a week or two, until the Passion season came around.

In between *St. Matthew* and *St. John* Max went to Liverpool on March 27<sup>th</sup>, to sing Orff's *Carmina Burana* with the Royal Philharmonic, conducted by John Pritchard. Max enjoys this work with its falsetto passages and another pleasant aspect of the trip was traveling by train. The night train from London to Liverpool leaves at ten to one a.m. but British Rail allows travelers to get on as early as eleven p.m. and go to sleep. The train arrives in Liverpool at four in the morning and is run onto a

quiet siding so people can have a decent night's rest. Max is always very happy with good service (and plenty of sleep), so he enjoyed himself. The day after the *Carmina* he returned home the same way.

His next important trip was to Vienna in May. He went to work with Concentus Musicus but making a recording was not the main reason for the journey (although they did make one). The Wiener Festwochen (Vienna Festival) of that year included Monteverdi's *II Ritorno d'Ulysse in Patria* in which Max had been asked to sing the role of Eumete (which he sings on the recording). He went in the expectation of having a marvelous time. May in Vienna is lovely, he considers singing opera great fun and the Vienna Festival is important. The director of the opera was a young and relatively inexperienced man called Frederic Mirdita. His concept of what his job was, did not tally with Max's, who was used to working with conductors to whom the composer's ideas were law. They did not usually try to tamper with the original but, on the contrary, they tried to restore it.

Max arrived in Vienna on schedule, having "cleared the decks" in order to spend several weeks there. He was immediately told that he was far too early and would not be needed for the next five days. When the moment finally arrived, Mirdita had one hour for him, no more. In that time he had Max sing his part (Eumete) through with no comment of any kind and also without really paying attention; he kept looking at the score and telling the pianist about tiny mistakes the man was making. When the mini-rehearsal was over, Mirdita said to Max out of the blue that he was not right for the part and could not participate.

Max had had some experience with opera before that time and, although he was sometimes a little awkward at first, he worked hard and quickly understood what was wanted. Mirdita decided without really seeing Max at work that he was not suitable for the part. Of course Max did not just accept this. There were days of discussions and Max investigated his legal rights. Finally, a

compromise was reached in which Max exchanged roles with another singer. He now had the role of the sun god, Apollo, who sings his whole part sitting on a cloud: a very static part and no problem for the director who did not have to coach Max at all.... As the new part required practically no rehearsals at that stage, Max was given several more days off and even managed to get back to Amsterdam for over a week so he could save on the hotel bill (which he was footing himself).

Back in Vienna, more trouble. On the first night the production turned out to be boring, in spite of the over-elaborate, flashy direction and the expensive stage effects. Then Mirdita decided to save face by cutting the opera. The conductor was consulted on what was to be cut and they decided on Apollo, Max's role. Max would not accept the cuts and canceled the rest of his engagement by telegram to the Festival directorate. More endless talks, with Telefunken's Wolf Erichson trying to mediate. Finally Max was told that Harnoncourt, the conductor, was on the edge of a nervous breakdown (not just as a result of this particular controversy) so Max decided to give in again and sang his shortened part in five more performances.

At the same time, the recording of *Il Ritorno* was also being made in Vienna and Max retained his original role of Eumete. When the second performance was held, on May 31<sup>st</sup>, Mirdita decided to come and talk to Max just before the curtain went up, with Max already in costume. He was surprised that Max was not glad to see him, as he had "managed to keep him in the opera". It was not quite the right moment for a confrontation and Max says now "Mirdita was very inexperienced, after all." At the time he was furious, however, and had totally lost his concentration. That was easy to hear on stage and, ever since, just before a performance, Max has kept well away from anything that might lead to tension.

Max wrote Mrs. van Willigen a letter:

“I sing my part hanging in the air, about five meters above the stage. I sit there on a little platform among the clouds and have to be hoisted up before it starts and then let down afterwards. Safety regulations make it necessary to wear a safety belt.”

The increasing number of authentic instrumental ensembles and performances gave Max the idea of starting an ensemble of vocal soloists: *Arti Vocali Antiche*. Harry Geraerts was one of the original members and the countertenor René Jacobs soon joined the group. *Arti Vocali* was very successful and at first it was fairly easy work, as the main problem for a group like that



*Arti Vocali Antiche*

is finding time to rehearse and most of the members were based in and around Amsterdam. However, when the Belgian René Jacobs joined and he and other members became busier and busier, finding time was much more difficult. After about two years, the amount of paperwork considered necessary in The Netherlands and the traveling got to be too much for Arti. Max definitely did not want a new career as an administrator and Arti Vocali Antiche died. “If we had had a good, full-time administrator, it would probably still exist,” says Max sadly.

In the meantime, the Bach Cantata series was continuing. Album five, with the cantatas 17 to 20, won the Deutsche Schallplattenpreis, as had the first album. The agreement was that Harnoncourt and Leonhardt would each do half the cantatas. At first Max sang in all the cantatas with both ensembles but for *Cantata 21*, “Ich habe viel Bekümmernis”, Harnoncourt decided to use the British singer Walker Wyatt. Few of the reviewers were pleased, and the Dutch magazine *Disk* wrote: “The difference in quality between the ‘Viennese’ and the ‘Amsterdam’ (Leonhardt) productions in the Telefunken cantata project are getting bigger and bigger. In BWV 21 the bass Walker Wyatt is introduced, who goes all operatic with an anonymous Wiener Sängerknabe (boy soprano) in the duet ‘Komm, mein Jesu’. Such ridiculous, theatrical antics...only serve to reinforce the objections to the nearest possible approach to authentic Bach... van Egmond ought to coach Walker Wyatt for a while...” Wyatt was replaced soon afterwards by Siegmund Nimsgern and Max wrote to H. J. Weritz of Teldec on the subject on November 22<sup>nd</sup>, 1973:

“I would like to emphasize once again that I am still in favor of more diversity in the soloists, including alto and tenor. Not only does this provide more variation for the public, the ‘old guard’ sometimes need to be compared to

others, so that they can be refreshed themselves and in the esteem of others.”

Max suggested in the same letter that he and Nimsgern share the bass and baritone parts, – with Nimsgern getting the “more dramatic and the very low ones” and Max the “lyrical and coloratura ones.” He also wrote about the four solo cantatas, suggesting that he do 56 (*Kreuzstab*) and 158 (*Der Friede sei mit dir*) and Nimsgern 82 (*Ich habe genug*) and 203 (*Amore Traditore*). He stated, of his own volition, that he would not sing Bach cantatas on any other label without consulting Teldec. Max never received an answer.

In January 1975 Max was told by Leonhardt (!) that Teldec was angry because the German press had reported that Max was singing exclusively for Seon/Philips (which was run by Wolf Erichson by then). Max wrote Weritz that he had given no interview to the German press and had certainly made no such statement to anybody: they could hardly blame Max for reports in the foreign press? He asked Weritz once again to answer his questions concerning the solo cantatas, as he had been approached by other companies and again received no answer. In the intervening period, the albums 12, 13, 14 and 15 had appeared without Max van Egmond.

In March 1977, almost three and a half years after his original letter, Max recorded the cantatas 56 and 82 for Seon/Philips (now Seon/RCA).

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## 1981

On April 22<sup>nd</sup> Max gives Mieke van der Sluis a last lesson before her graduation recital at the Conservatory. Then he takes a taxi to Schiphol and a plane to Toronto, having a trip uneventful “except for a drunkard who hit me on the head.” He is collected at the airport by Kenneth Solway, the director and oboist of Tafelmusik, the Baroque orchestra Max has come to work with, and goes to bed early in an effort to keep “that jet-lag feeling” at bay. The next day he, Solway and Elisabeth Wright (harpsichord) rehearse for Friday’s recital, after which Max has dinner with Colin Tilney, with whom he discusses their Vancouver appearance, scheduled for July.

The recital at the Trinity United Church on Friday is described by Max as “reasonable”. His voice feels a little rough. After the music, which includes Handel’s *Dalla guerra amorosa* and the Telemann cantata *Zischet nur*, the public is invited to “share refreshments with the artists in the lobby” and Max is presented with a book of poetry.

He spends Saturday and Sunday afternoon teaching master-classes and on Monday has “the first day off since I can remember”; he spends it shopping and sitting at sidewalk cafés. Tuesday he goes to the local YMCA, swims, exercises and then gets to work on the score of Telemann’s *The Day of Judgement* in which he will start coaching the singers tonight. Aside from being the baritone soloist, Max is to be vocal director for this production. Stanley Ritchie is the guest musical director.

On the twenty-ninth, the day before the Queen’s (official) birthday, Max gets an early-morning call from Amsterdam, where the evening editions of the newspapers containing the Birthday Honors list have just appeared: “Hello, Knight!” Max knew that he was in line for a decoration, of course, but could not be there

for the presentation because he was in Canada. He is very pleased with his knighthood, a token of esteem always being welcome. The decoration will be sent to him as no one is allowed to stand in for principals at the ceremonies.

On May 9<sup>th</sup>, the North American premiere of *The Day of Judgement* (as far as we know, says Tafelmusik) takes place at Trinity United Church, Tafelmusik's concert location. The performance of Telemann's greatest work attracts a large audience and is very successful. Max is satisfied with his work and that of the other soloists, Rosemary Landry, soprano, Allan Fast, countertenor and Ben Hepner, tenor. He is also happy with the Jubilate Singers and the orchestra. Tafelmusik, says Max, plays an increasingly important part on the international Baroque scene and North American interest in authentic performance practice keeps growing.

Max gets back to Amsterdam at six a.m. on the eleventh. He does not have to teach until eleven and in the afternoon there will be examinations. Mieke van der Sluis is giving her graduation recital in the Bachzaal and it is open to the public. The examining board consists of all the Conservatory voice teachers and here the student's own teacher has a say in the proceedings.

Mieke, wearing gorgeous red slacks instead of the more usual evening gown, is accompanied by harpsichordist Bob van Asperen, while singing early music. Like all of Max's students, she prefers to use a harpsichord where that is appropriate. The concert grand, for her Romantic repertoire, is played by Rudolf Jansen. Mieke's fellow students listen breathlessly to every note and her friend Marjan Smit, usually calmness personified, has cold, clammy hands. When Mieke gets to the end of the program there is long, loud applause. She has done very well indeed. Then the board retires and everyone mills around, waiting until Mieke is summoned. On her return she is radiant and happy friends and relatives load her down with flowers. Bob van

Asperen, Rudolf Jansen and Max all stand around beaming: Mieke and her mother need handkerchiefs. After the evening's festivities, Max gives another lesson. He has to go to Marseille the day after next to record *Harmonia Sacra* with Judith Nelson and René Jacobs. When he comes back after the weekend he will only have two more weeks before the summer rush starts. As soon as all the exams are over he is going straight back to America.

*Max and Nel van Egmond*



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## A Busy Weekend

On Friday, May 22<sup>nd</sup>, Max goes to Bonn where he has a late afternoon rehearsal with the Mülheimer Kantorei and Camerata Instrumentale Köln, conducted by Wolfgang Karius. The ensembles are celebrating the Telemann year by performing the cantata *Ich danke dem Herrn* (Psalm 111) and the recently discovered oratorio *Auferstehung und Himmelfahrt Jesu* – a premiere.

The Mülheimer Kantorei has twenty-three vocalists and the Camerata Instrumentale uses authentic instruments. They have three Baroque trumpet players, including the unrivaled Friedemann Immer, and the organist is Christoph Lehmann. The rehearsal, the only one for Max, takes from four till seven and the concert begins at eight, so his voice does not get much of a rest. There is no intermission and the performance is over by ten; Max can get to bed early. He will have to leave for The Hague at an ungodly hour, where the Friends of Art Song, of which he is now chairman, are going to celebrate their twentieth anniversary. That is an important occasion, which is sure to be marked by lots of speeches, tributes and flowers, and Max has decided that there are two people for whom he should do something special. That is why six a.m. finds him at the Bonn station, wrapping gifts in silver paper and red ribbons. Arriving in The Hague a few hours later, he walks to the *Lange Voorhout*. Max prefers to walk, but on this wet Saturday he has no choice: public transport in The Hague has been on strike for the past two weeks. The people organizing the festivities just hope it will not matter. There is no need to worry; people are already arriving in droves.

By half past one, everybody is waiting for Princess Christina, the youngest of Queen Beatrix's sisters, who studied voice and

now teaches music in New York, where she lives with her husband and children. Max is wearing the new decoration on his lapel for the first time and several people come up to congratulate him on receiving it.

The princess arrives late, as princesses are supposed to, and Max leads her to a small reception room. Then all the other people go into the concert hall – by now there are some five hundred of them and the Diligentia hall is crammed. Max enters and shows Princess Christina and her voice teacher, who has accompanied her, to their seats in the first row. He ascends the steps to the stage and opens the proceedings.

“Your Royal Highness, dear colleagues and Friends of Art Song...” his speech is fairly short and full of thank-yous to the people who have made the society’s work and this celebration possible. “I will note, with a certain amount of gratitude, that of all the board members, I have done the least...” He is followed by the honorary chairman, Frans van de Ven, who talks about the double purpose of the society: propagating art song and encouraging Dutch singers. He observes that far too little music by Dutch composers is performed in The Netherlands and presents baritone Ruud van der Meer, who sings five songs by the contemporary Dutch composer Daan Manneke.

Then Klaas Posthuma, the man who produced *Pathodia Sacra et Profana*, comes on stage to present the society’s contribution to music on this, its twentieth birthday: *An Anthology of Dutch Songs of the Twentieth Century*.

He tells us something about the album, which contains five records of contemporary Dutch music, recorded by Dutch musicians. Ninety hours of recording for four and a half hours of music, starting in December 1980 and ending in April 1981 (last month), with not a single dissonant note. Posthuma mentions the organizations which subsidized the work, the people who produced the text book, all the singers and “piano partners” who worked on it. He hopes to be remembered for this anthology after his death, he announces. Then he straightens up and says he

has “carefully avoided one name”. He talks about “the person who has made all this possible – a woman who has been assiduous almost to the point of madness on behalf of Dutch vocal music” and has spent the last year on the project. Protocol demands that he should hand the chairman the first album, says Posthuma, “but I enjoy not conforming to protocol.” Max, sitting in the audience with a silver-papered and beribboned package on his lap, nods his assent. The first album is for the vice-chairperson, Thea Ekker-van der Pas. Posthuma brings her forward and addresses her: “This is Thea’s Day” he says. Everyone calls it that. When he was talking to Elly Ameling recently she said “Oh yes, that is the day I sing for Thea.” He compares the release of the album to the birth of a child: “You do not know exactly what it’s going to look like but you know you will love it. Thea – your child.” Terrific applause. He presents her with the album and flowers and she goes back to her seat, all smiles.

Then Max comes for the second album. He is the chairman and also one of the contributors, so that is two birds with one stone; Posthuma appears to find some special satisfaction in this. Max, still holding his spectacular package, stands there, looking around the hall in an elaborately unconcerned manner. “Are you staying on stage?” Posthuma wants to know. “Yes,” so he continues. He calls for the oldest living composer whose work is on the album, but he is not present. Then the youngest, he decides, and hands Daan Manneke an album. All the other contributors will get one later.

Klaas Posthuma considers that he has done his job and wants to leave the stage. Max, with his face in the text book, motions to him to stay where he is and then addresses him. He states that Klaas has forgotten to thank himself, “so I will.” The metaphorical child is once again under discussion “and, if it’s illegitimate, he is the father (with apologies to Hans Ekkert).” Klaas is given one of the packages Max wrapped so carefully at the Bonn train station. Then he announces intermission,

descends from the stage and offers his arm to Princess Christina. They leave the hall and everyone else follows.

After the intermission, Elly Ameling and her “piano partner” Rudolf Jansen give a short recital. They are in a holiday mood, like all the other people at this festive gathering. Old friends have been meeting during intermission and the general air of gaiety allows Elly Ameling to relax. She knows these people well and, like Max, she reacts more spontaneously than is usual for her in a concert hall. She sings relatively unknown works like “La Rosa y el sauce” by the Argentinian composer Guastavino and old favorites like Poulenc’s “Violon”, before which she talks about the intimate relationship between the composer and the woman who wrote the text, Louise de Vilmorin. “Sensual freewheeling,” she calls the song. She sings Rossini’s Neapolitan tarantella “La Danza”, which is very rapid, with a difficult accompaniment. She reacts to the applause, the tiniest bit out of breath, by saying “If you asked us to do this one again, we wouldn’t!” Her interpretation of the final Lied, Schönberg’s “Gigerlette” is very personal: she does not believe a word of the story about riding in a coach drawn by four horses – If you ask *us*, they never left that room!”

Hours later, the festivities are over. The members of the Friends of Art Song have gone happily into the pouring rain, still talking about Elly’s marvelous performance, the superb cabaret, the food and drink served by board members during intermission and all the people they have met. The members of the board are sitting around the lobby, most of them exhausted but satisfied. Thea receives the umpteenth compliment of the day on her gorgeous gold brocade dress and now we hear the story behind it: Thea had already made it from “a length of cloth from Bangkok”, when someone suggested during a meeting that the ladies come in long dresses. “Thea defended her dress like a wildcat,” says a grinning board member. “It was discussed a little,” Max emends staidly. “And each person wore what she wished to.” Max has produced his other silver package and calls

for silence. He does not get it and claps his hands once, loudly. That works. Max reminds people of his earlier remark, that Thea is the dynamo behind the Friends of Art Song. He wants to thank her personally now, "because the manner in which you fulfill the vice-chairmanship makes it possible for me to be chairman." He hands the confused Thea his large package: a beautifully illustrated book on opera. He has added a card, on which the words of thanks he has just spoken are written. Thea has tears in her eyes and can only say: "Oh, Max." Later, she agrees: "Of course it is true, he has no time to do the work but you need a person like Max in the chair, a personality like his." Soon it is time to go. Early tomorrow Max has to return to Germany, to Cologne where Friday's Telemann concert will be repeated and recorded for the German radio.

St. Peter's Church, Cologne, is a Jesuit house of worship, the original tower of which dates from the twelfth century. The church was built between 1515 and 1530 and bombed by the Allies in 1943. It has been restored for the most part, except for the roof, the vaulted dome of which has been wood paneled. Luckily the stained glass windows had been removed before the bombardment as was an ancient wooden Madonna with Child. They have been replaced and can be admired in all their glory. While I try to do so without getting in the way of the radio technicians who are putting in cables, the sexton (a woman) wants to know if, seeing as I come from Holland, I would like to see their Rubens. ??? Yes, a lovely Rubens. She takes me to a set of heavy bars in a corner, behind which is hung an immense painting: Rubens' "Crucifixion of the Apostle Peter", one of the world's great art treasures. She opens the gate in the grating so that I can see it properly and goes back to numbering the pews. The rehearsal was called for four p.m. and Max arrives at three minutes past. He almost had to run from the station. The microphone rehearsal takes much longer than anticipated, till half past five. There is not much time for dinner and a rest.

Telemann's Psalm 111 *Ich danke dem Herrn* sounds wonderful that evening, in the full church. Then the second performance of *Auferstehung und Himmelfahrt Jesu* begins. At the end of the final recitative for alto, tenor and bass, Max sings: "Und du, Schwach-gläubiger, komm, siehe, zweifle nicht!" (And you of little faith, come, see, do not doubt) and on the word "zweifle" his voice breaks which sounds horrid. The next note is already perfect again, but this is a recording. It will have to be done over; luckily only the continuo is accompanying.

The final chorale issues forth: a delightfully joyous piece of music about which the audience is rapturous. Everyone keeps clapping until the conductor and soloists have taken three bows, gone off, come back, the orchestra has risen, been seated, risen again; there is no end to it. They decide to take the final chorale again as an encore: "Alles was Odem hat, lobe den Herrn! Halleluja!" (Everything that breathes, praise the Lord!). The wild applause is renewed and when it is finally quiet and the audience has left the church, the technicians turn out to have left as well, taking their equipment with them. The little bit of recitative that went wrong can not be rerecorded.... but the performance was a great success.

Max has a whole group of people around him. His friend Heino and an acquaintance have come from Aix-la-Chapelle, a Canadian musician Max knows lives here in Cologne and has come with her husband and a friend, my husband Frans, whose birthday it is, has come along and we all head for the Schildergasse for a drink. The conversation, in three languages, is lively and musical and nobody wants to enter the crowded, noisy, smoky cafés. Luckily the weather is very mild and we can find a table outside.

After Telemann, wine and cheese, we part. Max, Frans and I head for our hotel, passing a tall concrete pillar with water gushing off the top. It does not conform to our standards for art: "Just a little obscene," Max decides. Then we stroll past the

Cathedral, seeing the moonlight reflected in the Rhine, cross the station and find our hotel.

This was the last performance before summer vacation. Max still has to go to auditions for young singers who want to sing with the Friends of Art Song and work with his own students on their end of term recital in the Bachzaal. The day after that, he leaves for the United States.

For me, this marks the end of that part of the observation year which has taken place mainly in The Netherlands. I have been introduced to a different kind of life: that of the performing musician. Aside from the musical component and the personal element, the introduction took me into a much larger and more extensive world than I had known existed: the world of active and passive music lovers in The Netherlands. They are all over the place, choirs, ensembles, societies of Liederlovers, often rejoicing in considerable local interest but always struggling against lack of money and facilities.

The scarcity of classical music on Dutch radio and television and especially the scandalous underrating of all arts subjects in Dutch schools, bar the way to knowledge and pleasure for countless people. School children whose parents will not, or more likely cannot, educate them in the arts are deprived of something which is then said to attract “insufficient interest”. With the working week growing ever shorter, more and more people will have increased leisure time which, if used creatively, can be of lasting benefit to us all.

Music, all art, belongs to everybody and, as Max once stated when questioned about the purpose of the Rotterdam Doelen Hall, first the facilities must be available, then interest will follow. Full recital halls in small towns show this very clearly.

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## 1975-1980

In 1975 Max celebrated his birthday on the way to Amsterdam from Bremen, where he had sung the fourth, fifth and sixth cantata of the *Christmas Oratorio*. He had an article to write on Harnoncourt's coming Palm Sunday performance in the Concertgebouw and a Purcell recital to record, *Sweeter than Roses*, with Ton Koopman and Jaap ter Linden, all within two weeks. Then came the Passions, followed by one of the very first oratorios, *Jephte*, composed by Giacomo Carissimi (1605-1674). Immediately afterwards, Max rushed off to the English Bach Festival with Koopman's Musica Antiqua, Philippe Herreweghe and Collegium Vocale for cantatas and a complete *St. John*. From Oxford he went back to Bremen to record for the radio and on to Paris, where Lully's *Alceste* was recorded for CBS, under the direction of Jean-Claude Malgoire.

It was a hectic time in which Max was overworked and grew depressed. From Paris he wrote his manager Ariëtte Drost that he had sung for fifteen or twenty years now and had other ambitions for the second half of his working life, namely to devote himself to social work. "I feel musically spent" Max wrote...

"and the feeling of having been overburdened lately has nothing to do with it. You know me well enough to be aware that I would not take an ill-considered or panicky decision on a matter of so much importance.

I want you to understand that I have fought this out on my own (and do not wish to reconsider the basic decision); after all, no other person can fully experience what I am feeling. I have always considered music a wonderful profession and anyone with talent should certainly serve

art. How long one does so is a personal matter. It depends on the extent of one's obsession, how well one can stand the disadvantages, the feeling of being able to get better and better and so on. What distinguishes me from other artists is, I think, that my sense of duty (towards my talent and the public) is of more importance than my obsession or 'Ehrgeiz' [ambition].

By definition the artist becomes more and more egocentric – through his daily attentions to his own condition and achievements. I need to refocus my attention, less on myself and more practically on other people..."

Ariëtte was thunderstruck. When Max returned from Paris she set herself the task of convincing him that his feelings were caused by his being overtired after all and that a singer does extremely important social work: does music not console countless people? Does it not bring them joy?

Max was hard to cheer up. He wrote a draft of a reply to a letter from an admirer: "Music is delightful, a singer's life isn't always..."

Still, he continued working. During the Holland Festival he sang with an instrumental ensemble put together by Ton Koopman on the occasion of the three-hundredth anniversary of the Portugese-Israelitic Synagogue in Amsterdam (known to insiders by its initials.) The ensemble was called "Salomone Rossi", after the seventeenth-century composer of two of the sonatas played at the concert. The manager was initially told that all the soloists would have to be Jewish and both Max (because of his first name?) and René Jacobs (because of his last name?) were presumed to be so. As it happens they are not, but the Portugese-Israelitic community, after trying in vain to find suitable soloists and coming up with only one, the bass David Shapero, decided in the end to accept the others. The lack of Jewish soloists old enough to have the required abilities in 1975 is of course a result of the Second World War.

After more Holland Festival appearances and a trip to Paris to record for the RTF, with a recital in the Theatre des Champs Elysées, Max sang the cantata *Ich habe genug* [I have enough] and it was true; he had had more than enough. He disappeared for two months, as he and Ariëtte had agreed, to think about his future and especially to rest.

Now he laughs about the determination with which he insisted on quitting. A few months of peace did wonders and in September he returned to work, full of optimism. However, he continues to question the delights of a singer's life, although in general he is contented enough:

After about twenty-five years I can ask myself: has it been worth it? Have my expectations been fulfilled? Yes, generally speaking they have. I am certainly not one of those embittered artists who feel undervalued and think they deserve much greater fame. Aside from idealized youthful fantasies, in which one secretly models oneself on some celebrated idol, I did not decide in advance: in ten years time you have to have sung in the Scala, in twenty you must have a hundred recordings to your name. I happen to be rather down to earth; I wait and see. Whatever the future has in store, I accept it happily and make the best of it. The most important thing is that the future is always determined by the development of the voice and the “demands of the marketplace” there is for that particular voice... As far as the latter is concerned, I was very lucky because our solid oratorio tradition (particularly Bach) took me into the circle of Baroque specialists and that music has become exceedingly popular. In contrast to that, the art of the Lied has always been restricted to the ‘happy few’ and no one will ever get rich from it. Still, there is a tendency to pay more attention to chamber music, which includes vocal music.

In 1976 Max became chairman of the Friends of Art Song and was interviewed on the radio. What was it like, being chairman? he was asked. Max thought it was odd and a bit double-edged to chair a meeting and sing too. He stressed the importance of explicating Lieder texts, one of the refinements the society emphasizes. "Singing is the most personal expression of music. It comes out of your own body and soul."

In another radio interview a few months later Max enlarged on this theme, comparing the singer to a professional athlete or a ballet dancer: "You are a living instrument and you have to work on it."

Max was also asked what kind of popular music he enjoyed and answered: "not vocal music; I always pay too much attention to just relax, and certainly not the background music forced on one in restaurants and stores. I like organ music and, in the very light genre, Winifred Atwell's piano." So the interviewer played a recording of hers.

In December Max gave an interpretation course for Radio France. The producer of this popular series was Inge Thaes, who would invite musicians to give a full week's course which would open in the morning with one or two students in a broadcast masterclass. This would be followed by a portion of a long interview, previously recorded and divided into sections (biographical, on performing, on teaching) and then a number of the artist's records would be played.

Max was interviewed by Dennis Collins, an American who grew up in Paris and is particularly interested in Baroque music. He is an admirer of Max's voice and always comes to listen when Max sings in Paris.

Aside from radio recordings, Max continued to record the Bach cantatas for Telefunken and in 1976 also made an album of songs by Carl Maria von Weber, with the mezzosoprano

Carolyn Watkinson and others. Not only is it the only recording on which Max yodels (!), it is also his only record with folk songs, up till now. The record is hard to get; one has to order it via Germany [in 1984, JM], but that is well worth the effort. That same summer Max sang other works he is heard in too infrequently: concert arias of Mozart's. According to his fans, Max does not get enough opportunity to sing Mozart and Haydn's wonderful coloratura arias, to which his voice is so exceptionally suited. The difficulty lies in the fact that they require a full orchestra.

Towards the winter Max went back to Paris, where he gave a Baroque concert in the Théâtre d'Orsay, with Marie Leonhardt, Ton Koopman and Richte van der Meer. It was an afternoon recital and the musicians were not too surprised to find themselves rehearsing that morning in the stylised stable which is the scenery for Peter Shaffer's play *Equus* and which was to be performed that night. Their amazement knew no bounds, however, when they discovered that the management was planning to leave the harpsichord in its equine environment, as no one wanted to pull down the set for just one recital.... In the late seventies Max did a great deal of recording for various labels, including the Rameau operas *Zais* with the Leonhardt Consort, *Hippolyte et Aricie* under the direction of Jean-Claude Malgoire and Huygens' *Pathodia*. As early as 1973 Max had sung all the Huygens songs with René Jacobs on the Dutch NOS radio program "Aspects of Chamber Music", with Ton Koopman at the harpsichord. The 1957 Noske edition of Huygens was reissued by Saul Groen in Amsterdam in 1976 and this gave the producer Klaas Posthuma the idea of recording the entire *Pathodia*. He asked Elly Ameling and Max each to sing half of the twenty Latin psalms, twelve Italian and nine French arias. The recording was hailed with great enthusiasm and the singers' use of authentic ornaments, sober ones for the spiritual music and differentiated as to national characteristics for the

French and Italian arias, exhibited in one album precisely what is meant by authentic Baroque style: enrichment from the source. How Klaas Posthuma received the well-earned Edison is described elsewhere.

In the summer of 1979 Max went back to Oberlin for the Baroque Performance Institute and left again briefly the next day to give a recital with harpsichordist Lisa Goode Crawford in Princeton.

They flew from Cleveland to Newark Airport, where they were met by car for the trek to Princeton University, which invited various famous soloists to come for twenty-four hours and give a recital plus masterclass, during one hectic week. The day Lisa and Max came Gérard Souzay was just leaving and as they left, Elly Ameling arrived.

There was no car available to get Lisa and Max back to Newark so they were offered an air taxi, which Max describes as a Volkswagen van with wings. Even for such hardened air travelers as those two, it was special and they boarded silently, shaking in their shoes. Neither of them wanted to admit they were scared. Of course there was a lot of turbulence. Max states now that the view, when you fly that low, is so fascinating that he quickly forgot his fears: Lisa raises her eyebrows, laughing. Once was enough for her.

At the end of BPI, Max and his colleague Penelope Jensen recorded Austrian court music with the BPI ensemble for the new label Gasparo. Then Max took a short vacation before going to the Castle Hill Festival in Ipswich, Massachusetts, for the first time. Next, he flew back to Europe, sang in Berlin and in Paris, his first concert in the l'Oratoire du Louvre church. Max sang in Bach's *Cantata 36* under the direction of Philippe Herreweghe and found out that, although the acoustics in l'Oratoire are good, the subway which goes right under the building can be quite a nuisance.

Towards the end of January 1980 Max participated in the Northwest Bach Festival in Spokane, where he stayed with Mrs. Eric Johnstone, one of the Festival's staunchest supporters. Max has "his own" room, from where he enjoys the beautiful view across the city to the nearby mountains every time he visits Spokane; a refreshing change from the flatness of The Netherlands.

And from there to Bordeaux with the harpsichordist Bob van Asperen. He sang solo recitals, was paid and returned home where his Dutch bank was unable through currency restrictions to cash the cheque. Max sent it back to Bordeaux, requesting payment in some other manner and never heard another word about it...

In February Max was in Amsterdam, for a change, where the English Speaking Theatre of Amsterdam (a small professional company in which Max is interested) was doing one-act plays by Peter Shaffer and Christopher Hampton. The interior architect Frans Muller, who is my husband, and Jehan-François Boucher had designed the sets. Frans had come into contact with ESTA because I had been asked to advise them on repertoire, being a teacher of English drama, and Jehan-François had already designed sets and costumes for the Stratford Festival in his native Canada: friends had introduced him to ESTA. And so we met and were soon afterwards introduced to Jehan-François' friend and mentor, Max van Egmond. That meeting, in turn, led to one of the strangest relationships one can well imagine: between a biographer and her subject, whom Max calls "the object".

In March Max sang the *St. Matthew* with Herreweghe's Chapelle Royale ensemble, in the Paris St. Etienne, in Belgium and The Netherlands. He also sang Eisler's *Ernste Gesänge* and Haydn concert arias in the Concertgebouw before going to Italy with Bob van Asperen to "sing Italian Baroque for the Italians, where it was born; in Baroque palaces" in Vicenza, Milan and Padua. This time the musicians got both their money and their

money's worth in Vicenza, where they performed on the film set of *Don Giovanni*.

Max came home and performed with the Amfion Ensemble, in "On the Air", a radio program broadcast from the Aviorama at Schiphol airport. The Baroque atmosphere of periwigs and barouches contrasted interestingly with the taxiing jumbo jets seen through the picture windows. That night they appeared at a candlelight concert in Vreeland church, which was less of an anachronism.

Max left again for BPI and Castle Hill where he taught his summer courses. On August 30<sup>th</sup> he was expected at the Casino in 's-Hertogenbosch, where the twenty-seventh International Vocal Competition was about to begin.

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## Baroque Performance Institute

Oberlin, Ohio is thirty-five miles southwest of Cleveland. From Cleveland Hopkins Airport one takes Hopkins Limosine Service (a small bus) and arrives, after a thirty-five minute drive, in a town with two shopping streets and a square, with a scattering of college buildings among the wooden frame houses and a large modern conservatory.

Oberlin has both a liberal arts college and a conservatory and townees and faculty seem to agree that there is a big difference between the two kinds of students. In a town of ten thousand, the students have great influence on what goes on.

Oberlin is traditionally a progressive college and has been from the 1830's when it was founded. Oberlin was where the underground railroad surfaced, a fact commemorated by a length of track sticking up from the earth on the corner of South Professor Street. It was also the first college to admit applicants "regardless of race or sex". This was in 1833, several years before the first women's college in the U.S., Mt. Holyoke, was founded. Nowadays its policy has been extended to "view each person without regard to that individual's race, color, national origin, religion, creed, age, sex, sexual orientation and marital status".

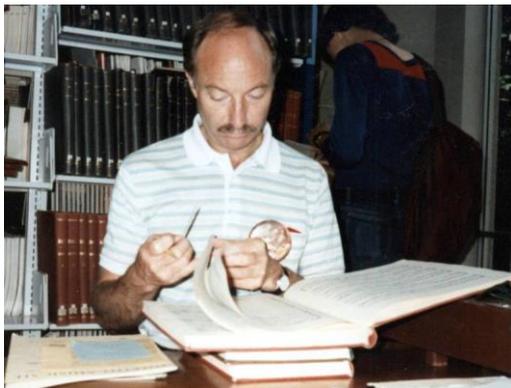
The college itself has over two and a half thousand students and two hundred and twenty-five faculty members. The conservatory (known more familiarly as the Con) has five hundred students and sixty-one faculty members. The various summer institutes run by the conservatory and the college keep the town busy all year round. The college students are interested in politics and current events and seem open to outside influences, whereas the Con students appear to the townees much more like a closed shop. One reason for this is that the music students, for obvious

reasons, are not allowed to study in their own rooms. They leave their instruments at the Con, in their lockers which are as varying in shape and size as the instruments they are built to house. Also, the only subject they discuss is said to be music. Judging by the two weeks I spent there, in which I neither saw nor heard a radio or a television set and a New York Times once left in the students' lounge led to a public reading, this is more or less true.

The Baroque Performance Institute (BPI) is an annual phenomenon, now celebrating its first decade. From the beginning, the musical direction has been entrusted to August Wenzinger, who was one of the prime movers in the Baroque Revival in Germany in the 1930s. His instrument is the viola da gamba. The director of BPI is James Caldwell, Professor of oboe at the conservatory, and the faculty includes Lisa Goode Crawford, harpsichord, Michael Lynn, recorder, Marilyn McDonald, violin and Robert Willoughby, flute – all of whom teach at Oberlin Conservatory. BPI faculty from elsewhere include Catharina Meints, viola da gamba, Philip Levin, bassoon, James Weaver, harpsichord and fortepiano, and Max, who is teaching voice with Penelope Jensen and a protégée of his own, Nancy Zylstra. There is to be a fortepiano seminar for two weeks directed by Malcolm Bilson and a Summer Organ Institute with Fenner Douglass of Duke University in Durham NC, and Harald Vogel, the director of the North German Organ Academy. Aside from teaching, the faculty will be giving lectures and recitals throughout BPI.

The conservatory is a building complex designed by Minoru Yamasaki, who also designed the NYC World Trade Center, and was completed in 1965. The central building has two concert halls: Warner, which seats seven hundred and contains a Flentrop concert organ with forty-four stops installed in 1974, and Kulas, a much smaller recital hall seating one hundred and fifty, with acoustics that seem expressly designed to aid young

performers. There is also a music library which ranks ninth in the US and has over fifty-five thousand volumes including a huge collection of sheet music, over twenty thousand recordings,



and numerous listening rooms. The library is in constant use during BPI, as students are expected to study new repertoire almost daily while in residence.

The instruments include over three

hundred pianos, almost two hundred of which are Steinways and within the practice area, in the Robertson building, there is an Organ Center with twenty-four pipe organs by Brombaugh, Holtkamp, Flentrop and other noted organ builders. The practice hall contains one hundred and eighty-two sound-proof rooms equipped with organs, harpsichords or pianos. I have even been in one with a McCobb fortepiano.

The connecting teaching unit, Bibbens Hall, which contains faculty rooms, administration offices and more practice rooms, seems to have harpsichords all over the place. Students are directed to rooms allotted to their ensemble by means of a number specification on the bulletin board, to which is added the name of the builder of the harpsichord or fortepiano in residence, the type and whether it has high or low pitch.

There are also two chapels and a church in the neighborhood at which performances are given. Finney Chapel has a three-manual sixty-stop Aeolian Skinner organ and at the beginning of this BPI Fenner Douglass introduced a fabulous new Brombaugh organ at Fairchild Chapel. The First United Methodist Church, situated right next to the Con, also has a (1974) Brombaugh.

What else? The eighteenth-century Galiano string instruments? The harps? The fantastic private collection of viols lent to students during BPI? To add a negative note, it was hard to find a recorder this year.

Max had left Amsterdam on Thursday, June 11<sup>th</sup>, the day after his students' recital in the Bachzaal. He spent Friday in New York and on Saturday flew to Cleveland, completing the trip by car. While at BPI he is staying with Lisa Crawford and her husband Rudd, who spent the previous year in Amsterdam. Max brought their twelve-year-old Emily some comics to help her keep up her Dutch in a pleasant sort of way. After a school year in Oberlin it has already started to fade.

The Crawfords have a large house about a ten-minute walk from the Con and Max, who bought himself a silver racing bicycle last summer and stored it with the Crawfords, can get there in five. Lisa, a performer herself, is understanding of Max's needs. He comes and goes as he pleases, eats breakfast there, lunch wherever he happens to be and dinner in the BPI dining-hall, in the Price Building.

After getting unpacked, one of Max's first jobs is to inspect his beloved bike and attach the kickstand he has brought for it from Amsterdam. He is also told he can swim in the neighbors' pool, which he prefers to do *before breakfast*, to Lisa's horror. Oberlin has two indoor pools, one of which is at the disposal of BPI faculty and students every day from twelve to half past one, but that is not the best time for a swim. Also, if the weather is good, Max tries to spend his lunch break outdoors – if he has time. There is a place to swim outside but it is a good half-hour walk away, one of the reasons he got the bike. However, in addition to his morning sit-ups, he will be able to get some exercise most days.

Sunday the fourteenth is the day the first group of students arrives. Students are encouraged to stay for at least two out of the three weeks of BPI, so the second, overlapping week, will

have the most students. This week Max has only seven participating in voice masterclass as their first choice. There are a few others, but they play instruments as well. Many of the students are used to playing modern instruments and come to BPI for instruction on Baroque counterparts. This year is unusual in that there are more new people than returning students. That means that the faculty will have to spend more time than usual showing them the ropes.

People trickle in all morning and afternoon. A number of tables have been set up in the lounge of the Con where the students find their schedules, are enrolled, pay for the meals they wish to eat at Price, are given locker numbers and IDs. These are large buttons depicting the same group of instrumentalists to be found on the BPI poster. A small sticker with one's name on it is stuck on and everyone is requested to wear them at all times. So it is easy to identify the BPI contingent in Oberlin. Oberlin is a friendly place. People smile at you in the street and say "Hi". Instructions are given as to how to find people and places and everyone is told to look at the bulletin board at least four times a day – new things keep happening at BPI. Max finds his students, talks to them briefly about repertoire and expectations, finds out who can play what instrument. By some oversight no accompanist has been assigned to the voice classes, so for the first day or two at least they will have to improvise. Luckily various people in the class play the harpsichord or piano.

After organizing his notebook into pages for each student and day, Max puts the things he will need in his studio. This room belongs to one of the regular Con teachers, but has been assigned to him for BPI. It contains a desk, couch and piano. As the desk is full of the other teacher's things, and not very big anyway, Max decides that the top of the piano will be the best place for his piles of paper. He stacks and labels them all neatly, just like at home, adding a large notice requesting people not to touch. As he is the only person with a key to the room this seems redundant, but voice students stand in the curve of the grand

piano when they are having a lesson so perhaps this is a reminder not to fiddle with the papers while singing. The studio clearly belongs to a voice teacher. It is full of knick-knacks like ceramic statuettes with wide open mouths and contains a long mirror. It also contains an air conditioner. Air conditioning is the bane of everyone's life at the Conservatory. The room is freezing, although the temperature outside is over ninety. Like everybody else, Max has a sweater with him at all times, putting it on and taking it off many times a day. There is no way of regulating the air conditioning in the studio as the thermostat is in a locked cupboard, but the cold air comes in through a grill high above the door and eventually Max, standing on several stacked chairs, manages to adjust the louvers so that the wind blows as far sideways as possible. It thus causes a gale on top of the cupboard and the ostrich feathers that live there in a jar are in constant danger of flying away, but at least the draft disappears behind the curtains rather than swirling around the room and Max has only the cold to contend with. He does so by wearing a blanket or coat whenever he is in the studio. Last year he caught cold by ignoring the problem and could not sing for a week.

After dinner we go back to the Con, where faculty and students are to meet at half past seven. Here I meet Lisa Crawford, last seen and heard playing beautifully at the English Church in Amsterdam during the summer. Here is Nancy Zylstra, associate teacher of voice, who was in Amsterdam in October. The other faculty members are friendly and what with the familiar college surroundings, the well-known student/teacher patterns transliterated here into musical terms reassert themselves. I feel very much at home.

The week's program is discussed for the newcomers. On Monday there are auditions from nine to ten, to determine each student's level. From ten to twelve every day Max teaches a masterclass. Twelve to three is a time for practice, food, exercise and the library. At three the ensembles go to work and the teachers

move from one group to another until quarter to five. Then there is either a lecture or a recital until half past five (sometimes till six, causing a subsequent rush to dinner) and in the evenings the students practice either alone or in ensembles while the faculty rehearse in Kulas Recital Hall for their Friday night concert. By eleven most people are ready for bed. Breakfast is served in Price from seven-fifteen to eight-fifteen.

After the new students have been told about the program and warned once again to consult the bulletin board repeatedly, the faculty remains in Kulas for a short meeting. The director, James Caldwell, has a bad cold, so his wife Catharina Meints speaks for him. Who is going to give one of the quarter-to-five lectures? When and on which subject? After a certain amount of discussion, it is decided that there will be a lecture on wind instruments Tuesday and Mr. Wenzinger will lecture on the gamba on Wednesday and on the life of Telemann on Thursday. Telemann is, after all, the subject of this year's BPI and all the faculty concerts are to be devoted to his music.

Friday is the night of the faculty concert and Saturday the students' concert. Sunday night being a night off, the faculty will be going out. In the second week Max has agreed to give a recital rather than a lecture. He will do so with Michael Lynn, recorder, and Edward Parmentier, who is coming for a few days, harpsichord. Among other works they will be performing a Telemann cantata they recorded together but which they have never performed live. That week there will also be a symposium with the Music Critics Association, which is meeting in Oberlin during BPI. It promises to be an interesting discussion. And in the final week Max will give another recital, with fortepianist Malcolm Bilson, who is due to arrive next week. Max will be giving about one private lesson a day in addition to all this and practicing for his concerts in Ipswich at the beginning of August with James Weaver.

After the meeting Max shows me the shopping district (two streets) and helps me shift my belongings to the dorm. I am to

live in Kade, a language dormitory, and for the first week I have the whole second floor to myself. It turns out that there are only two people on the first floor so the place is a haven of peace.

Monday morning at nine the voice masterclass meets in Prentiss Choral Room. Apart from Peter Lovely, all the students are new to Max, so he will have to hear them all sing before twelve.

Penny Jensen and Nancy Zylstra, who will be teaching some of these classes and working with the ensembles, are also present with notebooks at the ready.

The room looks like any other classroom, with the exception of the acoustic walls. There are a number of chairs, which we arrange in a semi-circle facing the harpsichord and piano. Come to think of it, those are not really regular classroom utilities either. Max gets a music stand from the back and arranges it to lie flat so he can use it as a desk. He puts his papers on it and faces the class. "Good morning, welcome to BPL." There is no need for people to introduce themselves as everybody is wearing a badge. Max has found out that one of the students is a good keyboard player and has also found a theorbo and lute player called Karen Meyers, who is willing to accompany the other students. She is the only theorbo player here, says Max (a theorbo is a bass lute) and "some of us are eager to take possession of her!" The others concur. It is a lovely instrument for accompaniment. Karen is only too pleased to work with singers, as it will help her when she goes back to teaching her own classes after the vacation.

Then it is time to warm up. Max has only eight students so there is enough time to do so in class. Next week, he warns, there will be a lot more people so you will have to warm up alone, before class. He apologizes for the early hour, as he will continue to do throughout the week. Ten in the morning just isn't the ideal time



*Max van Egmond and Derek Lee Ragin, Oberlin OH, 1981*

for singing, but what can you do? Max goes through the *nimme numme* routine, explaining to the students how they should *Max* breathe: the heavy stuff goes down, the steam goes up into your head – into your brain even. Nothing happens in the larynx – it is all in your head, the resonance chambers, and the breath pressing against the navel. He uses a long and a short vowel to loosen the jaw. He makes no concession to the American ear and uses his Dutch vowel sounds – most of what the singers sing is not in English anyway. Nancy and Penny do the exercises with the students.

Derek Lee Ragin graduated from Oberlin Conservatory last year. He has come back for masterclasses because he has found that he can and wishes to sing countertenor. There is not too much chance of getting help in this area of the United States and he is sure Max will know more about what he should be doing than his former teacher. For the last year he has been working alone, against the earnest warnings of a doctor who told him he was

harming his voice. His beautiful rendering of Purcell's *Evening Hymn* leaves everyone dumbstruck.

Jean Waller is willing to lead off and sings Schütz. Max describes her voice as a soprano with remarkable warmth. He is not going to comment on her performance now, as this is "just to get to know you." She is followed by Peter Lovely, who sings "Schlummert ein", an aria from Bach's *Cantata 84*. In spite of his remarks to Jean, Max cannot manage to let Peter sing through the whole thing without comment. This is one of Max's own solos and he is too involved with it to let Peter's less expert rendition pass without any comment at all.

Carlene McMonagle and Evanne Browne are both sopranos. Max remarks that Carlene is singing "with ornaments even before any instruction has been given" and she does not know quite how to take that. Evanne, he says, has sung an aria from, "I think", the *St. Matthew Passion*. The "I think" gets through only to Peter and me. The others, I find out later, have some idea of the Passions but are unaware of their place on the Dutch music scene.

Then we hear Elizabeth Moore, known as Libby. She has a nice mezzo, but her breathing problems are immediately apparent. She comes from Spokane and had a lesson from Max during his trip there in January, when they also sang together. She has also managed to have some lessons with Nancy, who lives in Seattle. Libby was a marine biology major who has decided her singing is of more importance to her than fish.

As everyone who wanted to sing has now done so, Max can use the time until twelve to tell the students what is expected of them. They will sing during masterclass each day and are supposed to find different things to do every time. Not just songs and arias, says Max, don't forget recitatives, which are often much more difficult. He encourages the students to work together and find an instrumentalist to work with. In the meantime he is thinking about who to sell to whom at this afternoon's "slave market".

He gives a short lecture on the Baroque:

Learning about early music, Baroque music, is a matter of stepping back through the centuries. The style of music and performance practice has changed through the centuries. The changes were gradual ones and, step by step, developments sprouted from the older traditions. So in the late Renaissance you will find some signs of early Renaissance, in the Baroque you will find some traditions from previous periods. When you look at the Classical period, Mozart, Haydn, Gluck, it would be more appropriate to view them from the Baroque tradition rather than to approach them from the Romantic tradition; in other words, the development seen in the context of previous traditions, is much more logical than starting from the methods and traditions we have nowadays and trying to approach earlier music from our own modern point of view. So the way voices are trained now and have been during the first half of this century is really not a bad one, because voice teachers did a lot of thinking and there were physicians involved, quite a bit of research, but the training of voices was focused on what was required for a modern orchestra, for a very large concert hall. Not only the style of singing developed and changed, but even more so the sound of the instruments. During the nineteenth century the instruments were modernized; all of them were getting bigger, producing a bigger, darker sound. The Baroque violin has richer overtones than the modern violin, so it sounds lighter and brighter. The same goes for Baroque flute and oboe; they have all become darker and bigger in sound. On top of that, the number of people in the orchestra has increased, for Brahms, Mahler and Beethoven, for example. But the human voice had remained the same, more or less. The size of the human body has increased and

the volume has too, a little; people are taller than they used to be, but that is all; I'm not sure what influence that had on the voice. The technique of singing had to focus more on lots of resonance, lots of carrying power, lots of sound that is maintained: legato, legatissimo. There always had to be a sound that could be heard over the orchestra. Of course this does not go for any kind of chamber music, even Romantic, at least it shouldn't. But training is so focused on opera or the orchestral things we have to do, that teachers sometimes forget that earlier music doesn't have to be performed with much orchestral accompaniment. The result is that the voice teachers of, let's say, the past eighty years, have been telling people to have a very big, rich sound that carries, and to forget about unstressed syllables because they won't be heard, just make everything even-stressed. And they said about the consonants: well, it would be nice if the audience could understand the words, but consonants don't give us much sound so let's forget about them and just concentrate on the vowels. They thought of consonants as noise rather than sounds. So, that means that articulation and diction were becoming weaker and also, all the nice things you can do with *messa di voce*, *crescendi*, *decrecendi* and subtle changes of volume as we were taught to do by Caccini, they said: O.K., it sounds pretty but the result is just not heard so forget about it. There are a lot of subtle differences that were just forgotten. What we have to do is return to the sources, to the beginning of the Renaissance traditions and the fact that singing actually was born out of speaking. That is what we should remember and build on. That's what we should try these coming weeks. We'll try to make lots of differences between stressed and unstressed syllables, thereby getting a much more dancing, much more elegant sound. And, about dancing, in the Baroque style most of the arias were usually based on dance rhythms anyhow. Even if they were religious. So it

has to be very elegant and have a rhythmic impulse that makes it interesting and lively. We'll work a lot on articulation, diction, on the consonants. It is interesting that the instrumental Baroque players nowadays use the word articulation too. They have adopted the word for their method of making groups of notes. For instance, two notes on one syllable gives a very natural articulation. Also we'll work on vibrato, of course, because the result of a bigger sound was almost inevitably that vibrato was increasing too. In itself there is nothing wrong with some vibrato. The absolutely vibratoless voice can sound a bit dead or cool. It's just the way you handle vibrato. Some people tend to think a vibrato is something you're born with and you just keep that all your life. On every note, no matter what kind of a note, you have the same kind of trembling. Whereas a vibrato can have quite some variations. And that too you cannot only hear but also see in Baroque playing. Just have a look during concerts at the string players; look at the hand of a gamba player or a cellist. Very often they start the note with a little vibrato and then, when a crescendo comes, they will increase the motion with the left hand and towards the end of the note it will become slower and stop. With a shorter note they will use no vibrato but a longer one will get some. So that means there are also variations in vibrato. In certain circumstances the vibrato should be less than in others, like in works for three and four-voice pieces by, for instance, Monteverdi, with those very open harmonies, very clear. If any of the voices is trembling more than the others, it goes out of tune because vibrato is a matter of pitch. So in certain cases it can be good to have rather a straight sound in order to promote good harmony with the other voices, or an instrument. On other occasions it can be very charming and vibrato really is something you can keep in hand. You must learn how to control vibrato. This has been proven so

many times. I've heard records by famous singers like, for instance, Gérard Souzay, who in his early years had a completely different vibrato from that on later recordings. He just changed that according to the fashion. I have records by Janet Baker, who does some repertoire with almost no vibrato, like the recordings of French late-Romantic music by Chausson and Ravel. She got the idea of singing those pieces almost without vibrato, making them very transparent, very mysterious, and it works very well. And she shows that she can control this. Whereas in other things she sings, such as long Handel arias or Beethoven, she has a normal, accepted vibrato. And then among popular singers, not so much pop singers as cabaret and such, good blues singers, they have, and you must have noticed this, increasing and decreasing vibrato on certain syllables. It comes and goes. That all proves that vibrato is something that is consciously made use of; it is not inevitable, not something that is just there, like the color of your hair or whatever.

We will be doing a lot of different breathing techniques for secco recitatives and arias. And I hope all of you will bring not only songs and arias but real secco recitatives from time to time, because that becomes so much livelier and more acceptable when it gets a different approach from arias. Of course when you sing an aria you are, as it were, one of the obbligato instruments, playing among the others. And if you have a real cantabile in singing music, you can show your beautiful voice, the nuances, with that. But when you sing a secco recitative you're much more a narrator, A preacher reads from the Bible at the top of his voice – that's actually how the Negro spirituals were born, the man in the church was really so enthusiastic and at that time had no microphones or speakers but he used the beauty of his speaking voice and it would gradually become some kind of singing. This is singing born out of

speaking and the same is the case with the very early Passions, even before the time of Schütz, when the Passions were almost without arias, just recitatives, reciting from the Bible, but on pitch. And what are the ingredients if you attack a secco recitative and want it more like this quasi parlando or poco parlando, which makes it all much livelier? Well, it's first of all not as much sound, not as loud as if you were singing an aria with an orchestra, because with secco recitatives there is only a very small accompaniment. And the louder your singing is, the more echo you have in the room and the less audible the consonants. The consonant is covered by the echo of the preceding vowel. So a little less sound on the vowels gives the consonants a chance to be heard. It is one of the things that should be understood very well, since you are not repeating the words as you do in arias. If you sing five or six words there, you sing them ten times. Here there are a hundred words that you sing only once and that's the only chance for the audience to understand it. So, less volume in recitative, lots of consonants, a very clear pronunciation, then even more than in the rest of the Baroque style, a big difference between stressed and unstressed syllables. Very often, for instance, a final syllable at the end of a phrase is unstressed and should almost be dropped. Often you hear stress on this last syllable and that is unnatural because the recitative has to parallel speech. Recitatives should not be sung too slowly. They should have approximately the speed of someone reading to an audience, from the Bible for example, not too fast of course, but just clear, lively speech. So this means that if you hear, I always give this little example, the first recitative from the *St. Matthew Passion*, if you get a tenor singing it there in the dramatic way he was taught to sing, like an aria, "da Jesus diese Rede vollendet hatte, sprach er zu seinen Jüngern" (dramatic rendering) – something like that. And this would

go on for something like three and a half hours, it's very long. And somebody stepping forward and singing an aria right after that, would do it exactly the same way. No difference. Whereas if the recitative were to sound like the spoken word (does it his way). You see? It's just like talking on different levels, pitch. Also, of course you know this, apart from what I've mentioned, there is much less legato and here we come to another very sacred item in singing. Singing legato is a very basic and important thing, no doubt about that. But again, if everything without exception is legato, legatissimo, it just gets boring and there is not enough nuance, not enough difference. Here again you can learn from the instrumentalists, like the oboists, flutists, and string players. They have all these slight differences. Legato, less and more legato, marcato staccato. A singer should learn that just as well.

Well, we should have a good week, nice voices, nice people as far as I can tell, and above all not too many. We'll have plenty of time to concentrate on all of you. If any of you want to sing duets, trios, that would be very welcome and we can learn a lot from that. You will get the information about the ensembles early in the afternoon.

Suddenly the lecture (and the class) is over. Lunchtime is conference time for the voice teachers. Each student's possibilities and preferences are weighed and Max tears a couple of sheets of yellow memo pad into squares. He writes the name of a student on each, in anticipation of the "slave market" where students are "bought" and "sold" into ensembles. This is supposed to commence at one, but well before that time faculty members gather in the lounge to start making up this week's ensembles. Max and Penny lie in wait for Grant Moore, determined to bag one of the few recorder players here this week for an ensemble in which they have envisaged Evanne singing. They succeed and at once rush off to capture a gamba and a

harpsichord. Victory is theirs. The four names and the name of the piece (Handel's *Nell dolce dell' oblio*) are dropped on the floor in a small pile. Grant is approached once again. Have you an oboe d'amore? Not this week but probably next week. So save the piece. Have you an ensemble for a super-beginner recorder to play in? This request causes Max to hesitate. How super-beginner is super-beginner? Well, she can read music... They will find something.

In the meantime more and more little heaps of paper are accumulating on the floor. A few teachers are still wandering about with one little scrap. This always happens. Either there are more instruments needed than there are playing, so that faculty members often find themselves playing in student ensembles, or else a student's repertoire is not in accord with the available instruments. Then a student will have to do something else, which occasionally leads to minor conflicts, ably resolved by the faculty. But on the whole everyone is quite satisfied when the ensemble arrangements go up on the board before three o'clock. By this time the practice rooms have been allotted to each group and everybody gets to work.

As the parts for every member of each ensemble have to be copied at the same time, the xerox in the library is in great demand all afternoon. People with pockets full of nickles line up with large piles of sheet music. Eventually, however, peace descends on the library and all the students are rehearsing. Now comes the time for the faculty to travel around the building, listening. Max has only two ensembles to coach this week, although he will sometimes be asked to listen to Penny's or Nancy's. His main concern is with a trio consisting of Elizabeth Moore, mezzo, Derek Lee Ragin, counter, and Karen Meyers, theorbo. Libby is going to sing "Cara mia cetra" by Sigismund d'India and Derek has two contrasting Purcell songs, "Music for a while" and "What shall I do?" Libby, who has only been singing solo for about six months, is exceedingly nervous and this makes her breathing problem worse. She has also chosen a

song with only two places in it where she can breathe, but it will be a few days before Karen points this out. As the student concert is on Saturday, there is really no time to find something else. The first few days of ensemble rehearsal are punctuated by Libby's cries of dismay. Derek has been at the game a lot longer. He and Karen, who is an excellent accompanist, go through the two Purcell songs in a matter-of-fact manner. There are some questions about the word stress which, with Max's knowledge of seventeenth-century English, as well as Italian, French and German, can easily be answered.

After working with this ensemble for a while, Max goes down to the other end of the building where Peter Lovely is singing a Bach aria accompanied by Sarah Sumner on the violin, Lynn Tetenbaum, a recent Wellesley graduate, and Ed Thadden, a harpsichordist in his late thirties whose work has prevented him from playing much for the past few months, about which he complains bitterly. This ensemble is Penny's to coach and Max just listens for a short time. Tomorrow he may have something he wants to contribute.

By half past four the ensembles are officially finished for the day, but many people continue. The faculty members retire to get ready for dinner and in many cases to start rehearsing for their own concert on Friday. Max is to sing Telemann's *Funeral Music for an Artistic Canary*, more popularly known as the *Canary Cantata*.

Dinner, at five-thirty, finds everyone hungry again. Aside from the two kinds of cooked meals you can choose at the counter, there is always a variety of salad greens on a table in the dining room. Coffee, tea, (well, a pot of hot water and teabags), whole and low-fat milk are also available in various parts of the room. As dinner is served from half past five to half past six, all this leads to a lot of walking around, so it is never really restful in the dining room. Wherever one goes the main topic under discussion is music – run a good second by “information, please”, meaning: where is so-and-so, what is what's-her-name

doing now? As the person in question is invariably a musician, this may be a distinction rather than a difference. Occasionally more general subjects are discussed; politics, for instance. The lead into it is usually a gripe about grants and art subsidies, which are becoming harder and harder to get as the Reagan administration tightens the nation's cultural belt. Most people feel that there must be other areas of expenditure in which the money needed could be found. The framed anti-nuke posters in the Price lounge indicate that such talk is not unfamiliar to these halls.

After dinner Max, who has been eating like a horse, contentedly goes off to digest his food and pore over his score of Telemann's *Canary Cantata* for Friday night's concert. I rush to the library, heading straight for the fabulous New Grove Dictionary of Music, which appeared at the end of 1980 and which I have been wanting to consult since I arrived.

E for "Egmond: Max (Rudolf) van (b.Semarang, Java. 1 Feb. 1936)" -good, the New Grove has the right date of birth, in contrast to Who's Who.

"Dutch baritone. He studied in Holland with Tine van Willigen-de Lorme and won prizes in competitions in 's-Hertogenbosch, Brussels and Munich. Appears as a concert and lieder singer and has occasionally taken part in opera. His preference is for Baroque music, especially Bach's: his warm tone, firm vocal control, thorough knowledge of authentic performing practice, and, within that style, his keen and subtle characterisations, have brought him international recognition. In the early 1970's he began recording Bach's complete church cantatas under Harnoncourt and Leonhardt. In 1973 he was appointed to teach solo singing at the Amsterdam Muzieklyceum and outside Holland he has given master-classes in the art of the lied, and in Baroque performing practice. TRUUS DE LEUR"

Quite a good article, too bad the information about where he teaches is so dated. Who is Truus de Leur? Max has no idea. Until I mentioned it, he didn't even know he was in the New Grove.

All Max's dozens of records can be found in the Con's record catalog (correctly listed under E: in the USA you usually have to look under V). The cantatas are available up to album 27 which is impressive: 28 only appeared in Europe last month. When asked, the librarian Linda Fidler admits to having that one too – only it is not yet listed. Full of admiration for all this efficiency, I go back to the catalog which contrasts with the one in Amsterdam's public music library, where performers are not even mentioned. You will look for Leonhardt and van Egmond in vain, in the city where they live.... Carrying a pile of new records, Linda goes off to instruct a bewildered student in the use of the Dewey Decimal System.

Tuesday morning's breakfast is enlivened by the dismayed volubility of a violinist whose first BPI this is. He was introduced to the Baroque counterpart of his instrument yesterday. "Of course I had seen them, but when I realized there was no chin piece, well... and this throws the fingering off. I have to start all over again, like a beginner. And the strings get all wet and my fingers slide around on them..." "The strings get wet because your hands perspire," someone informs him kindly. "They are real gut, not metal wound the way modern ones are." Today's masterclass starts with a warming up. Max gives his students "easy" vowels to start off; *a*'s and *o*'s make it easier to reach a high note than the more closed vowels like *ee*. He tells them to try for brilliance, for overtones, to add a touch of *ee* to breathy, dull tones for brightness. He gives them an *u*: "Shape the mouth for kissing," he says, "to help bring forward the placement." Also, you have to watch the nasal resonance with the next vowel sound, a French *eu*. Feel the vibrations in your nose,

too. *Eu, a, eu, a*, up the scale. The students stand in their favorite positions, some with hands folded, some with hands on their hips, a few with loosely hanging arms. After this, Libby leads off with some Telemann. She sounds hesitant about it and Max assures her it is fine “as long as it is pretty,” She wants to sit, but Max objects to just one chair. She will need room to stretch her body. So he stacks two chairs and makes her sit on them. She is visibly surprised at being comfortable. Max tells the class he always sits up high when singing with a theorbo. – Aside from singing comfort, it is such a long-necked instrument. He also devotes a few moments to how one should dispose singer and lutanist in relation to one another. The singer ought to be on the player’s right, not sitting up against the neck of the instrument, which may even be dangerous if it is moved. Also, it looks very nice if you can use the same score. This gives an intimate feeling, which goes well with the instrument.

“Komm, süsser Schlaf,” Libby sings. At the end Max says “Good. That’s very sweet.” Then he asks her to read the text aloud “because there are some words I don’t recognize.” The problem of American singers’ lack of foreign languages will arise again and again. The importance of knowing what you are singing word by word is illustrated in one of the first phrases of this song. Max starts commenting on the ornaments Libby has used, where ornamentation is indicated by a cross above the text. He dwells for a few moments on the difference between the French and the more ornate Italian ornaments and decides that Libby’s choice here was appropriate. He discusses other possibilities, too. Her slur, up and down, was all right. But a diminution, dividing the quarter note into sixteenths, more in the Italian style, would also have been possible. She uses an *appoggiatura* on the word “matten”, meaning sleepy, tired. That’s all right, says Max, but not a real trill, of course. On this word it would be inappropriate, far too lively for the meaning. If you do the *appoggiatura* in a kind of lazy way, you reinforce the meaning. “We should never forget that anything and everything

we try in this class is to make the music more expressive, to give it more character. People who don't understand us too well say: 'Oh, these Baroque freaks, they make everything so dead, they take all expression out of it.' Because they think that the Romantic style is the only means of expression."

Then he comes to a place where he wants Libby to do a trill. She has never sung one. "Start slowly," says Max. "Two notes, faster and faster." He illustrates. Libby tries but stops. "Come on, try." She starts again, again stops. "If you were to write it out," says Max, "it would just be two notes, repeated." "I know, I know," says Libby, looking as though she would rather write it out a hundred times than try again. But Max insists and this time she does better. "You're almost there," he encourages her. The class has been making sounds of encouragement and suddenly Libby produces a slow trill. "You're really almost there." "I'll work on it," states Libby firmly. And she does. By the end of the week the trill is fine.

Again one can see how intimately a voice teacher is concerned with his or her students. All sorts of physical skills must be taught. Sometimes, as in a masterclass where the students and the teacher are all relative strangers to one another, it is touch and go whether you can insist on a student's doing something as often as you think necessary without making the victim or others react in an undesirable way. Max is very good. His mixture of coaxing and encouragement is just right. The other students are sufficiently interested in the results to be helpful; otherwise they would be spending the summer somewhere else. Max told them at the beginning that they would profit from his teaching somebody else at least as much as from their own turns. Several people are doing trills *sotto voce*.

They get to the word "erheben" and Max stops Libby again. Here we have two half notes on a single syllable; that gives us a little time for an ornament. He thinks and then sings one. It goes up, he says, as "erheben" means "to lift up". Do you like that

one? OK, you do it. Libby does. “Another case of adding to the meaning,” Max remarks.

He has one more criticism and asks the class if anyone knows what he is aiming at. No one does. Well, he says, the other notes wobble, too, not just the ornament. If they are all wobbling, then you cannot tell which is the note and which is the ornament. Try again. Libby does, with no more success. It is like a tremblement, exclaims Max, and everyone, including Libby, laughs. Try again. Now all goes well.

Then it is Carlene’s turn. With Derek at the keyboard she sings “Music for a While,” the Purcell song Derek will do at the concert. Max labels it very peaceful, very restful, and this is certainly how it has been sung. There is an objection, however. Nancy tells us that the song is from Oedipus and pretty ominous. “Music for a WHILE,” she says – “but not for long.” Max considers what his Paris-bought Who’s Who de la Mythologie says on the subject and has to agree. He does not want to go into the matter, though, because it is a sensitive point. Max sings the song calmly and peacefully himself, in agreement with the text, although even that is doubtful, given the snakes that drop from Medusa’s head. In any case he defends the viewpoint that the song may be peaceful if sung outside the context of the piece. (But not here and now: he will not argue with Nancy in class.) People who do not know the background can not understand the threatening atmosphere, according to him. His attitude does not seem very consistent: people who know nothing about Baroque ornaments can not understand all that is being sung either.

Is there anything else? Max wants the other students to comment upon Carlene’s performance. It takes a little time, as they are still wary of criticizing one another, although it will become easier in the course of the week. The friendly and concerned way in which the students discuss each other’s work, always remembering to praise what they like as well as criticize what they do not, is evident from the beginning, though.

Someone says hesitantly that it was sometimes a bit hard to understand all the words. Max replies that, although the masterclasses are mainly on interpretation, he will also discuss general voice technique and diction where they pose a problem, “if you don’t mind.” No one has objections and he goes into the matter of final consonants.

Wasn’t it a little too loud?, another student asks.

“Remember,” answers Max, “that whatever we want to get across from the stage to the audience has to be somewhat exaggerated. Because it seems that there is some kind of invisible curtain between you and the public which holds back what you are trying to do. So you have to spit through the curtain and make people believe. I think the reason for this is the distance, but also the psychological fact that an audience is passive, sitting back. They wait and see what is coming to them, what you have to tell them. And if they don’t know the song, they don’t know what to expect. You have it all in your mind. You are prepared for it. Fifty percent of the words would be enough for you, but they have first to be woken up and then to be convinced that what you’re doing is right. So exaggerate. Then it comes across as normal to the audience.”

“Do it once more,” says Max, “and we’ll stop here and there for little details. Extend the syncopated note slightly on ‘wondering’,” he adds. “Just let it hang slightly and then after that going down on a little coloratura you make up for the lost time. That’s what they call a Baroque rubato; you sometimes lengthen a note a little bit, and before you even come to the next bar line you’ve made up for it by speeding up.” They go on and Max points out that Carlene should “tease” the audience with the dissonants on the long, drawn-out “eternal.”

Then Derek sings another, more lively Purcell song, “What shall I do?” It goes quite high for him and in answer to Max’s query

he admits that, though it isn't uncomfortable, it would be easier at the end of the day. "Well, maybe you will bring us a little serenade tonight," Max suggests. "And what do you do with trills?" "Well," says Derek, "I sort of play around with them." "Yes, in your free moments – improvise during rehearsals, not during concerts of course. Otherwise you may end up with Puccini."

Jean comes last in this class. She sings a recitative and is told "Get that text into your head and your mouth, then the rhythm and finally pitch. A matter of gymnastics. You will find you spend more time on one recitative than on two arias."

At twelve there is a break for lunch and a general rush to get at the library copier. Max takes his *Canary Cantata* to the reservoir, where he has a swim, some sun and a bit of lunch. At half past three he goes to his first ensemble group to see how Libby, Derek, and Karen are getting on. They are working through the translation and Max helps. Then he listens to them sing and says a few words on ornamentation, warning them to vary the ornaments each time.

He next visits Nancy's ensemble, which consists of Peter and Evanne, Ed Thadden, harpsichord, and Lynn Tetenbaum, gamba. Nancy is there too, of course, and so is the harpsichord coach, so the room is fairly crowded. As all three teachers are concentrating on different aspects of the work in progress, the effect is fairly chaotic.

Max is explaining something about the Italian language to Evanne. "Have you ever heard Italians talking at the market? It is like pistols shooting, *rat tat tat tat*, all those consonants – they are very explosive, the Italians; you should have something of that." The harpsichord coach is trying to be of use to Ed, who despairs of getting his fingers to do what his ears want to hear. Nancy is going through Peter's music with him. Then Sarah Sumner arrives and they start on the Bach *Mass in A*. Sarah is so enthusiastic that Ed and Lynn, who has been beaver away

quietly in the background, are suddenly enlivened and the continuo goes soaring up and down like a happy roller coaster. Sarah's music falls on the floor and she sings her part loudly until she can pick it up on the violin again. Peter sings until Max walks over to him and points to a place where he has gone wrong. The continuo goes straight on, though, and Nancy takes over the vocal part until Peter comes back in. "It's a storm," says Max, "more tumultuoso!" A storm it may be, but such a joyous one that nobody wants it to end.

After ensemble Max has a little time before dinner to work on his Canary – the recitatives need a little more, he thinks, before tonight's rehearsal. Faculty rehearsals, in Kulas, are public, because the students can learn a lot from them. But between dinner and the Canary, there are just a few more items. From seven to quarter to eight Max is giving Derek a private lesson. At the office, the students can buy tickets, entitling them to private lessons. Then they make an appointment with the teacher. Max will keep the number of private lessons down to one a day if he can do so without shortchanging any of the students. This is the first one he has given Derek and he wants to confine it to technique. Derek agrees and they talk first about breath. Taking a breath is O.K., says Derek, but turning it into sound is something else. There is sometimes breathy singing, says Max, not one hundred percent effective. You use more air than you should. He tries to determine whether this is a physical defect (some people have a leak) or not and decides after various exercises that it is not. They talk about placement and Max says again that the main activity is not around the larynx. He compares the sound of a voice to a string instrument. If the sound were only that of a bow touching a string, you could use a stick as well as a violin. But a violin is a beautifully shaped instrument, rather like a body, with air inside. Brilliance is discussed – making a voice shiny, like a kettle whistling in your head, adding the *ee*. In singing there is quite a percentage of cheating. You give the audience *ee* but mix it with *uu* to give it

more brilliance. Max explains, demonstrates, Derek listens, writes, imitates and suddenly it is ten to eight. Derek has ensemble practice and Max hastens to the First United Methodist Church next door.

Harald Vogel is giving a one-hour concert on the Brombaugh organ and a huge harpsichord with sixteen foot stops (double the usual length) recently built by Keith Hill. The sixteen-foot instrument is the subject of violent debate and the maker, eating dinner earlier with Max, Mr. Vogel and several students, was taking on all comers while the organist tried simultaneously to pour oil on troubled waters and converse with Max on an entirely different subject (their work in Europe) in German. As Max rounds the last corner he sees that the prospective audience is still standing in line outside the church. The doors are closed and snatches of Trumpet Voluntary heard between what sounds like growls, proclaims that Keith Hill has not finished tuning. He is not late, though; he tuned it before dinner but simply has to do it again. The instrument was moved today and the weather is changing too.

By quarter past eight everyone is inside. The church is by no means full. A unique concert like this would probably fill any philharmonic hall in a city, but in Oberlin everyone wages a constant war against the clock. Usually, where active and passive musicianship clash, the active wins. Oh! – The opportunities missed at Oberlin!

The sixteen-foot harpsichord is not sixteen feet long, but derives its name from organ building; middle G having an eight-foot pipe and the C below it a sixteen-foot pipe. Harpsichord strings need not be sixteen feet long at all and their pitch is influenced by thickness as well as length. This harpsichord has hand stops which bring the corresponding sets of jacks into contact with the strings as desired, either singly or together.

Harald Vogel's introductory remarks include the information that during the first wave of the Baroque revival, around 1900, large sixteen-foot harpsichords were used, which had a muddy

sound. The second wave used shorter ones and this, he states firmly, is the beginning of the third wave in which we will achieve a synthesis of the nice second wave sound with size. He then sits down to play. It is almost twenty past eight.

The program has been chosen to show off the “big sound” of the harpsichord as well as to contrast it with the organ. Vogel plays Buxtehude, two preludes on the organ with *Nun Lob mein Seel, den Herrn* on the harpsichord in between. Then follow Böhm variations on the organ and a prelude on the harpsichord and some Murschauser on the organ again. When he gets to Krebs variations on Bach, it is clear that we are not going to be able to stay for the final pieces: two Bach toccatas, one for organ, one for harpsichord.

Pleased to have heard such fine playing, I follow Max out after the Krebs/Bach, trying not to call attention to myself (fat chance -we were in the second pew). Hoping that Mr. Vogel remembers the conversation at dinner and therefore knows why we are leaving before the end of his concert, I trail behind on the way to Kulas. Better apologize tomorrow.

The *Canary Cantata* is rehearsed with the ensemble. It is supposedly sung by an elderly gentleman, saddened at the death of his bird. The opening words, “O weh, mein Kanarin ist Tot” (Alas, my canary is dead) set the tone for part A, which Max describes as “the neurotic section.” Later the singer describes the perfections of his pet and then becomes furious at its murderer. This middle part, adjuring the murderer to eat until he bursts (the word is “Frisst”, guzzle) is repeated several times, something a dramatically inclined singer can make the most of. Eventually the singer becomes melancholy again, telling us that he will bury his small feathered friend in the cool sand. He ends with a sudden, renewed outburst of violent feeling against the murderer, who ought to be drowned with a stone around his neck, and is abruptly silent. “Mein Kanarine, gute Nacht; multo romantico,” says Max. “I keep forgetting to tell you – this is like a lullabye.” He sings it for them and then the ensemble plays this

section with the vocalist. The contrast with the foregoing part is remarkable. The strings follow Max's lead and as his "gute Nacht" dies away, he waves his arms over his head in a "take it away" gesture that sends the strings spiralling upwards in a saccharine crescendo. "Not too Schumann?" he asks. No, the listeners feel it is not too Schumann.

Wednesday starts the way Tuesday did, with a warming-up session. Max is very enthusiastic this morning, illustrating his breathing exercises with his whole body. He inhales as if using a suction pump and the students watch, fascinated, as the air expands his lower abdomen. Press against the belt, he tells them, not too high. As if elves were jumping up and down on your diaphragm. The gulps he takes are checked by his lower lip and he compares the feeling this gives the singer to sobbing. The abdominal muscles are also used when exhaling – shooting out bullets of air, in his description. However graphic the words, the students are clearly learning by example – they watch, try, do as he does and it is clear that they are feeling the sensations he has described. Max shows them, tells them, several times, with a remarkably vigorous display of enthusiasm.

Don't you get tired? I ask later, and he admits that he does, but the time in a week's masterclass is so short that he feels he has to pack as much as possible into it if the students are to leave with the feeling that they have achieved anything. Hence the extra effort to make people as enthusiastic as Max can, which is pretty enthusiastic. Still, I feel there is more behind the transformation. Max is altogether more lively, more of a physical personality. He dresses differently here, more conspicuously (he considers that American) and seems more (or more openly) aware of his body. It could well be the sun that has caused this metamorphosis.

In the afternoon my impression is confirmed by accident: while I am in the shower the furthest from the door, two students come in and, while showering, have an extremely candid conversation about various male teachers. Hair style, weight, clothes,

everything is discussed. The ladies are highly enthusiastic about Max and what they have to say leads me to conclude that they are not the only ones. The physical fitness he radiates, his beautiful body and the tight T-shirts and trousers, his charming smile -they are all for Max. When they start on underwear I can no longer stifle my giggles. As that happens to be at the moment of soaping my face, I sneeze loudly and the students are shocked into silence until I appear, sneezing and laughing so hard there are tears in my eyes. Then they see the joke too.

Max listens to students, talks, demonstrates. Casually he intersperses the words of great masters as he talks: "Messa di voce, as Caccini describes it in the preface to his songbook;" "Monteverdi describes the sound going ON..." He never actually says: "read them" but the message gets through.

Over lunch Max talks about his decision to cut down on the number of lessons at the Amsterdam Conservatory as a regular teacher. This year's program is altogether too strenuous to keep up for any length of time and next year there will be four trips to the U.S. and Canada. He spoke to the director of the Conservatory about his decision before leaving Amsterdam and was told he could give guest lectures in the form of master-classes, if he wishes. That sounds like a good idea. The main problem is, of course, the double one of the lost years as far as his pension is concerned and the matter of getting as good a teaching job again once he decides to stop singing. That will be a while yet, but the day will certainly come. "All my life I have lived like a shopkeeper; carefully and looking to the future. I've had enough." says Max. "I will just trust that I can support myself simply by giving recitals."

Put like that, there is nothing against this plan of action. Of course he can do just that. But the income is bound to be less regular than if he teaches as well, and mortgage payments in Holland are getting higher every year. Also, income tax is very high indeed and, although the Dutch professional is allowed to average out his or her taxes over any given three-year period, it

is always a bit riskier than a regular paying job. The amount of money a self-employed person is allowed to set aside for old age before starting to pay tax is laughably small, especially when seen in the light of inflation. Max knows all this but the other side of these scales contains an awful lot of talent and a benefit in terms of fuller commitment to his own work, as opposed to that of his students – more time, more rest.

In the afternoon, before ensemble, Lisa Crawford and Max rehearse the recitatives with the harpsichord. Then Max has a look at what the students are putting together, during which he announces to Peter that Bach is “acrobatics wrapped up in beautiful paper.” Peter has a private lesson at half past four, after which we all go to dinner.

Peter’s lesson has caused us to miss the Wenzinger recital/talk on Telemann and the Gamba, which was otherwise well attended. The dining room is almost empty at first, but just before six a large group of people comes in together, all excited about the new slant Mr. Wenzinger (who insists on the “mister” in spite of his recent honorary doctorate from Oberlin) had given many of them on performance practice.

After dinner we “Meet the Critics”.

The Music Critics Association, which has nearly two hundred and fifty members, was established “to act as an educational medium for the promotion of high standards of music criticism in the press of the Americas.” For the last ten years or so they have organized and co-sponsored institutes like the present one, the aim of which is to help the “fellows” gain more insight into the particular aspect of music to be discussed. At Oberlin, this year, it is The Baroque. The institute will be chaired by James Wierzbicki, music editor of the St. Louis Globe-Democrat and the three faculty critics are Michael Steinberg, formerly of the Boston Globe, now artistic advisor to the San Francisco Symphony Orchestra, Nicholas Kenyon of the New Yorker and Stoddard Lincoln, record critic of early music for Stereo Review who teaches at Brooklyn College.

The faculty critics will each be present for a number of days to discuss their work with the seven fellows, who will be writing articles after each Oberlin concert as if for publication. Needless to say these efforts, often experimental, are not to be made public.

After introducing myself to Michael Steinberg and James Wierzbicki, I tell them what I am trying to do and that I would be very interested in attending some of the critics' sessions. Max's early career in the newsroom and his interest in reporting and reviewing are of some interest to them, as they feel that reviewers and artists often misunderstand one another's motives. This seems a polite way of saying artists do not always appreciate what critics are trying to do, and I rejoin that many artists seem to feel the same way about reviewers. However, the people at Oberlin these ten days would hardly have come if they had not been interested in Baroque performance practice, so it is unfair to take it out on them.

There is going to be an "Artists meet the Critics" symposium next week, at which it seems likely that this area will be under discussion, if not fire, but in the meantime I get permission to come to the proceedings whenever I like. The fellows will be spending the evening writing a review of Mr. Wenzinger's lecture-cum-recital and these will be discussed in the morning. Later on there is another run-through of the *Canary*, as well as of the other Telemann cantata to be sung at the first faculty concert – *The Patient Socrates*, which will be performed by Penelope Jensen and Nancy Zylstra. Mr. and Mrs. Wenzinger are both at this rehearsal and laugh out loud at the dialect expletives Max hurls at the unseen cat.

After the rehearsal we go to Max's studio. Max has the key on a very short string tied to his belt, although he has a whole ball of twine on the piano. He has to stand flat up against the door to open it. I didn't think my expression changed, but the next day he bought a lovely keychain, apologizing as usual for spending money on himself. "I thought I could have a little treat."

The time: Thursday morning, June 18<sup>th</sup>, 1981, nine-thirty a.m.  
The place: the faculty lounge. The event: the critics' first workshop.

The couches in the lounge are full of sleepy people, most of whom stayed in Kulas until ten last night listening to the faculty rehearsal and then had to write their Wenzinger reviews, due in at nine a.m. so they could be copied. The coffee table is stacked with records, books the fellows may borrow and various announcements of coming events. The bulletin board has a few reviews thumbtacked to it, including Nicholas Kenyon's New Yorker review of February 2<sup>nd</sup> on The Ann Arbor (Ars Musica) *Messiah*. The three-page review was a survey of performance practice of the Handel oratorio spanning two centuries, contrasted the performance in Ann Arbor with another recent one and a new recording, displayed extensive knowledge of musical techniques and history, and was a model of its kind. It would have belonged on that board even if Kenyon had not been coming. He described Max as "direct and thrillingly precise." James Wierzbicki outlined the morning's procedure. Everyone was to read his or her own review aloud, after which criticism would be invited. In practice, the criticism could be broken down into three categories: differences between interpretation of the text as read beforehand by the other critics and the meaning found in the inflections of the author; "nitpicking" (you said second week of BPI, this is the first), which included split infinitives, spelling, misplaced modifiers and a running battle about singular vs. plural pronouns with collectives; and third, real problems. Aside from the question whether a stringed instrument used was a citherone or a theorbo, (How do you find out? Ask.), the non-musical problems seem the most difficult. Reviewers have editors and editors, it seems, are pretty grim. The length of articles, the use of adjectives, the decision as to how technical one may get, all these are the editor's. Different papers have various policies on specialist subjects and The New

Yorker is exceptional in allowing its music reviewers to assume a high level of general and musical knowledge in its readership. Every time one of the critics refers to any performance or performer not actually under discussion, he or she is challenged: Would your readers know who that is? Do they play in your city that often? Michael Steinberg provides another eye-opening comment: “We know that newspapers are read inattentively by people standing on subways or juggling bowls of crunchy granola.” “Later in the day you compete for ten minutes of ‘what else?’,” adds Pauline Durichen of The Kitchener-Waterloo Record, Ontario. “You write up, rather than down,” says Michael, “for keeps and not ‘self-destruct’ articles.” The others agree.

There is a long discussion about the function of the reviewer. People who write enthusiastically are admonished not to become cheerleaders. One’s first duty is to the public, that is agreed on. But there are differences of opinion as to how this duty should be fulfilled. Writing up rather than down (Steinberg) is very hard to reconcile with a younger reviewer’s feeling that knowledge intimidates. Almost all the younger fellows seem frightened of displaying erudition for fear of being thought arrogant. This is a far cry from the attitude many artists think reviewers have. Their view is often that individual reviewers consider themselves God – laying down the law on a performance, often without the necessary background knowledge to make any kind of well-founded criticism. This is the other side of the coin.

Michael Steinberg: “Our job is to invite people in.” He goes on to show how different approaches are possible and even necessary, depending on which people are being invited. Then the conversation turns to specific difficulties again. Handel with or without the umlaut? Not so hard, he dropped it himself. But is he Friederich or Fredrick? Steinberg: “You drive yourself crazy looking for consistency which you’re never going to find.” Bill Kiraly, the husband of Philippa Kiraly who writes for Northern Ohio’s Live magazine, clarifies a technical point about a

stringed instrument. Bill and Pippa write together and he is also attending BPI as an instrumentalist. He is requested to bring his instrument and exhibit the differences in playing. There is some talk about how to describe the way a bow is held for playing the gamba, as compared to a cello. Overhand and underhand? No, that isn't clear. Say "held like a pencil" – that should get through to everyone.

One result of this particular discussion is a session later in the week in which a number of instrumentalists demonstrate for the benefit of the critics (and interested students) how the Baroque instruments and their modern counterparts differ technically and in sound. Sound is another keyword in most of the critics' meetings. How does one describe it? Adjectives fly. British-born Pippa's "plummy" for an oboe d'amore is greeted with cries of pleasure.

After Max has had a swim, some crackers, an apple and a sun bath, we meet for tea and pie at the Mercantile – a store which defies description. At the front they sell expensive foreign delicacies including many English teas and biscuits (which are either crackers or cookies to an American, depending on whether they are salty or sweet) and even Dutch chocolate. But there are also souvenir towels, household utensils and all kinds of badges and buttons. In the rear there are a number of small tables where one can have either lunch or a snack. They make all kinds of salads and sandwiches, ice cream sodas and sundaes. The place is usually crowded with BPI people. To the distress of many of these, a loudspeaker emits constant croons and moans. Last year, Max says, they had real music. All attempts to achieve a return to this happy state of things fail, however, and in the course of the week quite a number of persons stop eating at the Mercantile and go to the Campus Inn across the street instead. The food is not as good, but at least you have to pay for the Muzak and if you refrain from paying, the box on your table is silent.

Max is given an account of the morning's proceedings and is astonished by the problems the reviewers have to deal with. He is even more amazed by their view of themselves, as being in constant competition with all the other sections of the paper for the brief and limited attention of its readers.

Ensemble time is mainly for Derek, Karen and Libby, whose breathing problems are causing Max some anxiety. He cannot give her too much attention in class, but this evening she is to have a private lesson and Max is filing away remarks to make on her technique until then. He takes copious notes in his private shorthand.

During ensemble Lisa comes in to listen to and help Karen, the theorbo player. Coming in, she announces: "Here is your roving continuo coach." Afterwards we all go to Kulas, where Mr. Wenzinger is lecturing on "The Life of Telemann". He warns his audience not to measure Telemann against Bach all the time, as many biographers do. If Telemann had not lived at the same time as JSB, the evaluation would have been different.

Wenzinger has drawn a map on the blackboard to illustrate his remarks on Telemann's travels and we can see how limited they really were. He draws a parallel between the efforts of Telemann's mother to turn him into a lawyer rather than a mere musician and the attitude of many parents today. His audience of students appreciates this.

It is easy to underestimate Telemann's work nowadays, Wenzinger says. His easier works are published all over the place – they lead to too simplistic a view. The *Harmonischer Gottesdienst* is not representative.

At six the lecture is over – just in time, says Mr. Wenzinger, or we will get nothing to eat. In an hour and a quarter he has made his audience reappraise Telemann. Most of the table talk in Price is about Telemanniana. It seems a good moment to add my bit. Looking up Telemann in The New Grove after breakfast, I had found "Telemann had the gift of attracting musical students to

himself and of engaging them in pleasurable activities.” Wondering if it was only my dirty mind that made me do a double take, I read this to various people with a straight face. The reactions are similar to mine; in fact, several people do not believe me. Nancy’s “Where do I sign up?” and William Steinberg’s roar of laughter reassure me as to my sanity. This must be a case of bad translation. The subject switches from Telemann to Grove and during the rest of dinner we are regaled with strange anecdotes from the knowledgeable about spoof entries bearing the names of Stockholm subway stations?? After dinner, back to the Con for Libby’s private lesson. First, a short conversation about the song Libby had sung in the afternoon. There is a possibility of taking a really deep breath in the form of a sigh in this song, what Max calls *respiration expressive*. This helps Libby, but Max is not satisfied. “There is a shakiness,” he says, “not just the vibrato. Do you always have this when you sing, or is it more when you are tired or nervous?” Libby answers that nervousness makes it worse. “Think of having a sort of heavy balloon, pressing down inside you,” Max suggests. “Always down, never up, like an invisible massage of your respiratory system.” Libby, a biology major, grins. “Sing against your...” Max hesitates, “against this.” He pulls his belt to show how low he means.

“Then the sound should be steadier. Learn to control the breath so that it doesn’t escape from you first. Then you learn to use the air you have in a very economical way, so that there is no false air passing through to change the sound. One of the reasons for shortness of breath is that not a hundred percent of the air you use is transformed into sound. Learn how to have a shiny tone with lots of overtones, without feeling activity in the larynx – the centers of energy are in the diaphragm and the palate. Then you have to add warmth if you need it by adding a little chest quality to the head voice. This you get by lowering

the jaw, the tongue and the larynx together. It is true that by nature your voice has more warmth than what is coming out right now, but don't worry about it yet – that will come later.”

After all, Libby has only been singing seriously for six months. Max teaches Libby to inhale at the bottom “where there is no bone to restrict the intake,” to check what she is doing in front of a mirror (it must come forward if it can't go down) or by putting a towel around her middle and holding the ends crossed behind her. The towel should pull tight as she takes in air. If there is someone to help, you can also check by lying flat on the floor with a pile of books on your belly, letting the other person bear down on them a little, Max instructs. He goes through all these manouvers, first showing Libby how they work on him, then making her try. He gives anatomically intricate instructions, making full use of the knowledge Libby already has. Then they hit a snag. Letting the air out, you have to start from the top, holding on to the air at the bottom of you longest, Max says. That is hard. It also seems to be at variance with what Libby has learned before. Max tries to show her how he caves in, as it were, from collarbone to navel, his breastbone moving down. Libby insists that she has no control over her breastbone and as Max can not think of any movement that lowers it, they both wonder if it is attached differently in men than in women. As it happens, Max has never given these particular exercises to a woman student before.

He goes back to an earlier analogy; to suggest to yourself that your ribs are made of lead – the weight gently and gradually empties the balloon – FROM ABOVE. Libby promises to practice. A great deal of what she is learning will need practice and self-suggestion. “What I say isn't the ultimate truth but it helps me a lot,” Max suddenly remarks. “Next time I will give you some rhythmic and relaxing exercises.” The lesson is over and he is expected in Kulas for a *Canary* rehearsal. The walk down the

hall takes a minute and a half, in which time the teacher has become a performer again. The almost exaggerated gestures and movements, the often metaphysical comparisons, meant to shock into awareness and instinctive understanding, are pulled back inside himself like ectoplasm. His shoulders straighten, his walk becomes tranquil, sedate. He enters Kulas and walks to the stage as if before an audience, hearing in his mind's ear the opening bars of the cantata; all else forgotten.

Dinner on Friday is an animated meal; Max is looking forward to singing the *Canary Cantata*. The dining hall, which has no air-conditioning, is sweltering, however, and it bothers him.

When Max feels the heat he takes off everything not necessary for decency even his wristwatch, which he then straps to his belt.

He seems to feel that any item of clothing that restricts movement makes him even hotter and he has a couple of extremely wide short-sleeved cotton shirts he wears on these occasions.

Most of the people around are equally uncomfortable and soaking wet, at least in patches. Max keeps his discomfort inside and somehow manages to perspire unobtrusively, if at all.

After a frugal meal he goes off to dress for the concert. He has a surprise in store for the audience. By a quarter to eight Kulas Recital Hall is full of students and faculty members dressed with unaccustomed neatness in deference to the townees in the audience. A lot of the women students have gone so far as to put on a skirt or dress and the townees and faculty are positively dressed up.

The performance, all Telemann this year, starts with a *Quartet in b minor* and a *Sonata for oboe and continuo*. The program gives information about the music on one side and a complete list of performers on the other. Many of the instruments are played by only one performer so it is not too hard to deduce that it is James Caldwell playing the oboe sonata – if you can distinguish a Baroque oboe from a tenor recorder at fifty paces.

When the instrumentalists come on to the stage for the *Canary*, however, you just have to know that the lady sitting down at the

harpsichord is Lisa Goode Crawford rather than Penelope Crawford.

There is an expectant hush after the instruments have been tuned. Then Max, timing it perfectly as usual, walks solemnly onto the stage. He is wearing a high-necked, wide-sleeved black shirt, a shiny and dramatic article of clothing made for him recently by a friend. Unbuttoned, it looks casual enough but fastened to the top and in combination with formal black trousers and shoes, it looks positively funereal – which is what the wearer had in mind. Max gazes, saddened, at the audience, many members of which have exploded into laughter. He is wearing one ornament – a small yellow canary-shaped badge. This infantile object was found earlier today in the Mercantile by Jane Starkman (viola) who presented it to him as he was about to go on stage. For a moment he considered pinning it on feet up, but decided that most of the audience would not be able to see and the front rows might become hysterical, so he rejected the idea. He introduces Telemann's *Funeral Music for an Artistic Canary*:

“The program gives the title of this cantata but not the sub-title which is *A Tragi-Comic Cantata*, but I would like to say that I feel it very seriously. And on top of the translation that you have I would just like to say that the first aria is a lament and the second aria is in praise of the vocal faculties of the bird. Then comes a very furious aria against the one who killed the bird (laughter). This is the aria ‘Friss, dass dir der Hals anschwelle’ - Swallow as much as you want, till you burst (you’ll probably find it in the translation, if it is not an edition adapted to modern morals.) And then comes a sort of farewell song, a good night song for the dead canary, ‘Mein Kanarine/gute Nacht’ (that’s a very lovely piece) and then the final recitative in which we are finally told who has killed the bird and that is the last, agitated part of that recitative and it suddenly changes into platt-Deutsch – vulgar German, slang, so you’ll probably not understand it any more – it happens to be close to Dutch.” (Roars of laughter.)

Then the cantata begins – “O Weh, mein Kanarin ist Tot”. The voice wavers, inconsolable. The audience is torn. Max’s solemnity is terribly funny – but if you laugh you cannot hear. People restrain themselves nobly until the furious “Frisst” aria. Mourning Hamlet is transformed into Mephistopheles, all rage. Somehow Max even suggests the cat – his eyes narrow, he spits and hisses the syllable FRISST. The audience cracks up – quietly. Max’s copy of the cantata (a reprint of the 1788 Bärenreiter edition) contains even more admonitions and notes than usual for him. “Woedend” (furious), “sissen” (hiss), “marc”(ato) (p P P!) and many of the ornaments for the repeat are added. The singer’s pious wish that the guzzler’s stomach and intestines be ripped open by the bird are underlined in wavy red pencil, a decrescendo that follows is blue. There are a number of mysterious scribbles not to be found in Grove’s Table of Ornamental Signs.

The recitative and farewell that follow are in complete contrast to the foregoing. The laughter, which was really aimed at Max for being so terribly angry about the murder of a mere canary, showed that he had the audience believing in him. Now his disconsolate expression, never overdone, and pathetic tones silence the appreciative murmers and the hall is solemnly still, for the moment. It is all very moving. The bereaved one is told (by himself?, the words are in the imperative) to take the bird in his hand and put it gently down in the cool sand. “See to it that he lies safely there to please me as I suffer” (um mich bei meinem Leiden zu vergnügen). And let this be the last honor that you write on his tombstone:..” At this point the strings have to change the mood in one measure and the gentle voice hardens into staccato platt-Deutsch: “Du Streckebeen”(you, Grim Reaper), you wanted to eat my bird – what I want is for you to have something thrown at you.

The sudden transition is followed by an abrupt ending. To save the audience from confusion. Max simply closes his score with an angry snap that follows quite naturally from the preceding

words. The public explodes into cries of approbation and loud applause. Max starts to grin, willing now to share the joke. He motions to the instrumentalists to take a bow. Lisa has been enjoying herself visibly throughout. Her happy grin and pouncing attack on the harpsichord cause some speculation as to whether she is perhaps the cat in disguise. After a couple of curtain calls it is intermission.

Later, the concert continues with several instrumental works and arias from *The Patient Socrates* sung by Penny Jansen and Nancy Zylstra, who are supposed to be Socrates' two wives. They sing well and the audience is appreciative, which it makes plain by prolonged applause.

After the concert, the audience leaves Kulas and the BPI participants wait in the student lounge to congratulate the musicians, who arrive almost immediately. Max looks pleased at the reactions and listens attentively to comments on his performance, but when they become mere praise he disappears quietly from the noisy lounge. His bike is on the terrace by the main entrance. The transition from bright lights and the chatter of many voices in the air-chilled lounge to the heat and darkness of the long terrace with its ornamental pool, is abrupt. As Max relaxes into it, tranquility is shattered by a hideous noise: some creature, probably a bullfrog, is lifting its voice in song.

Saturday morning begins with a rehearsal for the evening's student concert. Max goes to listen to Derek and Libby. Then Evanne has a private lesson and afterwards, if the sun is shining, we will head for the reservoir and a little sunning and swimming for a change. Max has had a busy week and tonight he is going to cook for his hosts, Lisa and Rudd Crawford. The New Yorker critic Nicholas Kenyon, who is arriving in Oberlin today, has also been invited: he is a friend of Lisa's.

In the meantime, over breakfast, musicologist Tom MacCracken explains how hard it is to obtain imported records. He complains about Schwann's catalog, which not only lists very few of Max's

recordings (meaning they have not been imported?), they are also way behind on the Bach cantata albums, so whoever does not happen to know how many have appeared, will not be able to order them. Tom says that records which do become available are also withdrawn from circulation far too soon. In all of New York City, he says, there is only one store that sells Telefunken and other European labels at reasonable prices: J & R Music World, opposite City Hall. He finds no consolation in the fact that the situation in The Netherlands is similar, and the conversation ends on a note of dissatisfaction – at which point I realize I am late for Derek and Libby’s rehearsal. Hurling my notebook, a bathing suit and a towel into the basket of the bike lent to me by a kind colleague, I pedal like mad for the Con. The rehearsal is all right. Derek is calm and assured, but Libby, who was fine yesterday, feels the world caving in on her again and has almost visible butterflies. Everyone tries to reassure her; her solo sounds fine! Evanne’s lesson follows and Max starts with basics. How many octaves has she ever spanned? One can not have what nature has not given. Has she ever sung very high? As a child, or when she was a bit tipsy? Evanne answers that she started off as a contralto, but her teacher would not allow the lower regions. “I look for what is the most natural thing,” says Max. “We must explore every corner of the voice.” Evanne tells him that her voice is a third lower when she has not sung for a while. Max nods. “When I don’t sing for a few days, my voice shrinks,” he says. “We will practice the highest and the lowest note without forcing.”

While Max talks, he walks back and forth and has to keep stepping over a little pile of objects: a beach towel with his trunks, an apple and an orange on top. The reason why all this is on the floor is presumably to remind him that he is actually going out into the sun, later on. His SUMMER tote bag is standing in the corner, empty.

Max talks about Julia Culp, who was a well-known singer with a range of only an octave and a half. “She had everything

transposed into that small range. She only gave recitals, of course, but achieved a great deal in spite of everything. Yeah...” the drawled American affirmative sounds odd in the middle of Max’s precise speech but, like everyone who is good at languages, Max immediately takes on the vocal color of whatever area he is in.

After a great number of vocal exercises, Evanne goes off to practice for tonight’s concert, determined to extend her range in the way Max has been teaching her.

After coffee we bicycle to the reservoir, which is at quite a distance from the campus. We pass a lot of houses interesting to the Dutch eye. In Holland there are esthetic committees limiting the kind of buildings and the color schemes of the houses. Nothing so wildly eccentric as the cheerful pink or green and blue dwellings we pass would be allowed in The Netherlands, which is sad in a way.

We leave our bikes among the trees at the beginning of the path to the reservoir and push our way through the undergrowth till



we get to an open field of some sort. Skirting it, we go through some more of what Max calls The Bush, and eventually climb an unexpected dyke leading to a large pond, totally invisible from below. The “reservoir” looks more like an abandoned stone quarry, with large slabs of granite all around it. Max leads the way to a spot where flat rocks shelve down to the water and a couple of slabs make good substitutes for

beach chairs. The stones slope down into the water and he warns me that the rock is slippery under it. We dump our things, jump in. The water is warm, almost too warm and a bit brackish. It smells brackish too. We have the whole huge area to ourselves and swim about silently for a long time, just savoring the silence. To people living in a country as overcrowded as ours, this is the height of luxury.

Climbing out carefully across the slippery slabs, I notice an assembly of curious fish. They are not in the least afraid of me and come nosing up to investigate. Calling them to Max's attention, I am told that they are always like that and become positively affectionate if you feed them.

After protecting myself perfunctorily against the unaccustomed Ohio sun, I watch Max coat himself with suntan oil – a light filter for most of his body, a stronger one for the crown of his head and his nose, which tend to burn. He then selects two graham crackers and an apple from his store of food and, offering me some too, starts to munch. The apple is peeled meticulously with the aid of a knife, rummaged for at the bottom of the tote bag marked SUMMER. Then, arranging himself carefully to catch a maximum of sun, Max closes his eyes and begins to compose salads in his mind for this evening's dinner. Meanwhile I feed the fish on crumbs and apple peel. All too soon we have to go; Max to do the shopping, I to the critics' session.

The reviewers have decided to write about the faculty concert as an exercise and have gathered in their room in Warner Building to discuss what they have wrought while burning the midnight oil. Several reviewers are critical of the "Telemann only" decision; their authors feel that a little of some other composer could not have hurt.

It is clear from all the articles that the *Canary* was the hit of the evening. Interestingly enough, of the four reviewers who

mention the balance between the two sopranos in “Socrates”, two praise it and two condemn it.

One of the reviewers, Bill Ratliff, has found the time to do some ornithological research. He has read Warner Menke’s foreword to the reissued 1788 edition (1962) in which Menke defends his use of the sub-title “tragi-comic” as “justified by the content” of the *Canary Cantata*. Menke writes “the sub-title chosen by me” [my translation, JM] so it is not clear whether it had been used before. He continues “To the honor of the composer I can determine on the grounds of my knowledge of his character, that the wonderful Sarabande no. 7 ‘Mein Kanarin Gute Nacht’ originated in deep sympathy with the defenseless creature.” Bill Ratliff has also read a book written by Richard Petzholdt in 1967 (Telemann, Leben und Werk, VEB Deutscher Verlag für Musik, Leipzig GDR) and translated into English in 1974 by Horace Fitzpatrick (London, Ernest Benn Ltd.). Petzholdt avers that there is nothing in the least funny about the cantata – he can just see the poor elderly gentleman, out of sympathy with whom Telemann writes this work; lost without his feathered companion. Ratliff notes the discrepancy in his review and thus starts a heated discussion on the matter. The music with its sudden changes of mood is conducive to smiles, if not grins, where the singer becomes furious. Petzholdt’s contention that the singer’s wrath is directed towards Death and not a cat, is simply not supported by the music, nor is it supported by the text. Certainly, the word “cat” is not used in the original Platt-Deutsche text, but only in Dr. Menke’s (far too free) translation into High German. On the other hand it is beyond the bounds of probability for an early eighteenth-century text to refer to Death as a “strekkebeen” and utter the wish that stones be thrown at it. Moreover, the use of dialect in itself is, in that period, a sign that one is dealing with the comic genre. I feel strongly that Mr. Petzholdt should have known this about eighteenth-century rhetoric and in the lunch break I head for the library. The book is there – both in the original and in translation. To my dismay it is

the only Telemann biography available in English. Looking up the reference I find that Bill Ratliff has quoted the English translation correctly (which was to be expected) and also that the translation itself is a correct rendition of the original (you never know). As I look at Petzholdt's weird argumentation, my eye is caught by a couplet from *Der Schulmeister* on a preceding page, in which Hasse is mentioned. On the basis of this one couplet, Mr. Petzholdt concludes that the two men (Hasse and Telemann) knew each other and were "probably friends." No other evidence is given. So much for Mr. Petzholdt.

The reviews of the faculty concert have more in common than appreciation of the *Canary*. They show how difficult it is for the music critics, who are used to concerts with modern instruments, to describe the appearance, playing and sound of Baroque instruments. Eventually a consensus is reached on how to depict the bowing of a gamba: "the bow is held like a pencil" is found to be the clearest description. "What do you do about a particular instrument?" No one can expect a reviewer to know the history of every instrument played. August Wenzinger and Catharina Meints were playing what are obviously unique instruments last night. If you want to write about them, you'll have to ask. A warning is issued about the collection to which some of the viols belong. Years ago collectors were proud to have the ownership of their valuable instruments mentioned in reviews. Nowadays things are different -so don't say where they come from.

Great difficulty is experienced in translating a particular sound into a word or words or comparing the sound of a modern and a Baroque oboe, for instance. Pippa's "astringent" is greeted with cries of joy. The lack of knowledge about Baroque instruments is a major problem and the reviewers decide to ask the musicians for help. A few days later this results in most of an afternoon being spent in one of the practice rooms where the experts bring, play and expound on the modern and Baroque versions of their instruments. This is probably one of the most fruitful practical results of having this workshop during BPI.

There are a lot more practical problems in reviewing. Can you assume that this week's reader read last week's column? No, says Nicholas Kenyon, and even if they did, don't assume that they remember it. Our primary function really is to give an impression of what it was like to be there.

The first person pronoun: do you use "I"? Kenyon: "I use it much more than I did because I realize more and more that what I write isn't Holy Writ with which it is impossible to argue." James Wierzbicki, realizing that the meeting is turning into a mass interview of Nick Kenyon, shifts the discussion into a more general channel.

Some of the happiest inventions by the reviewers of last night's concert: *an open-top harpsichord. Sparkling Baroque vaudeville. Some canards of his (van Egmond's) own. He earned his wings the hard way. Lisa Crawford: the cat who swallowed the canary.*

Arriving at the Crawford's house, I am greeted by a large, panting Husky in a coat too hot for this weather. The Crawford's daughter Emily comes rushing out the door as I am about to ring the bell and tells me to come in. Lisa and Max are busy in the kitchen; Lisa's husband Rudd, a colleague who teaches math at the local high school, and Lisa's mother are on a shady back porch – an American amenity one tends to forget in between visits. Rudd and I indulge in a little non-musical shop talk and then the conversation turns to mutual friends. As it gets close to six, Rudd decides it is a good idea to drive down to the Con and fetch Nick Kenyon from the lecture on temperament he attended, rather than to await his arrival. The extra quarter of an hour will be better spent at the table than walking in the heat. So we drive off in the station wagon. I am going along to spot Nick, whom I met this morning and whom Rudd has never seen. To our surprise this plan works perfectly and we find him just leaving the Conservatory. Refusing Rudd's offer to put up the back seat, Nick slides, more or less on his stomach, onto the area normally used to transport a harpsichord.

Dinner is a great success. Lisa's cold watercress soup is just the thing for this heat. Max then brings in at least a dozen bowls, large and small. There are several salads, each with its own dressing. He tells us which belongs where and also that he never puts much dressing on, so whoever likes a lot must take more. He also bought fruit for a fruit salad, but at the last minute he decided not to make it – so he distributed the fruits, one to each salad. There are also little bowls of peanuts and grated coconut, borrowed from the Indonesian cuisine and new to Nick Kenyon, who has never had a *rijsttafel*. Lisa and Rudd, having recently returned from a year in Amsterdam, know all about this speciality.

Max brings in even more bowls and platters – cherry tomatoes, cheese with herbs, ham from a special store which sells many kinds. There is wine and cheerful musical conversation. Nick tells Max how much the reviewers appreciated last night's performance and how sorry he was to miss it. Then Lisa brings in home-made sherbet and coffee, following which we have to leave for the concert.

The students do well. Libby is less noticeably tense, but cool, collected Derek, singing Purcell like an angel, stands there with the score shaking uncontrollably in his hands. Luckily he knows it by heart. His nervousness does not affect his performance, either. Everyone does quite well. At the start of an instrumental trio something goes wrong. Lisa at the harpsichord simply stops and the players begin again. Three students and a faculty member play a quartet on four violins, using two stands. At the end of each movement they rotate, so everyone gets a chance at first violin. The audience loves it.

One of the singers hasn't yet learned about the importance of wearing the right kind of shirt or blouse. Singers' breathing makes some kinds of synthetics stick to their chests and shake with each movement. That looks awful. Max says later that unless you have perfect breath control, you should wear

something well-fitting but not clinging. Very loose shirts and long earrings, too, have a tendency to set up sympathetic movements.

Max is much more relaxed than at the end-of-term concert in the Bachzaal – is it only two weeks ago? There, he only relaxed when his most advanced and experienced student sang. Here, the opposite seems to be the case. He listens dispassionately to Carlene, Libby, Jean and Evanne – only becoming tense when Derek (who he regards as exceedingly promising) and Peter are singing. He occasionally makes notes during all his students' performances and takes a lot of photographs during the applause. At the end of the concert there is general rejoicing. Everything has gone off quite well – amazingly well if one considers that nobody even started thinking about this Saturday concert until Monday night. After congratulations all around, most people leave the Con in groups, bent on making a night of it, even though Sunday breakfast is no later than the rest of the week. Whoever wants alcohol will have to cross the corporation line for it; Oberlin is dry. Presti's seems to be a favorite Saturday night spot for BPL.

Sunday is for resting. The new students will turn up in the course of the day, as will forte-pianist Malcolm Bilson. Max will be rehearsing for his recital on Tuesday and the faculty is going out to dinner. That turns into a wild night.

After Japanese food, everybody is persuaded to go to the disco next door. Not only do they all dance, Max even admits afterwards that he enjoyed it. "It shakes you loose," he says. But the wildest part of the night is yet to come. There have been hurricane warnings in other parts of the state and around four a.m. the wind starts to howl and shriek, rain pours down in huge quantities and with a terrific CRACK a main branch disengages itself from the tree just outside my window – taking a power line with it.

By nine a.m. the branch, and the others that have come down all over town, have been carted away by a friendly and competent

crew of men, who assure us that nothing but property damage has been done. A few minutes later the electricity is restored too. And so the second week of BPI has begun. It is busier than the first. Several new vocal students have arrived and Max will be giving a recital on Tuesday as well as singing in Friday's concert. But the schedule is the same.

The Tuesday concert is to be held in Fairchild Chapel, which is just across Tappan Square. Edward Parmentier has come from Ann Arbor to rehearse with Michael Lynn and Max. The bass aria from *Cantata 123* and the cantata "Weg mit Sodom's gift'ge Fruchten" have already been recorded so they do not need too much time, though they have never performed these works before an audience.

Rehearsals take place in Michael's studio which is a bit small to house Edward and his harpsichord, beside the organ it already contains. The room is sunken, in order to contain the organ pipes. Only Max and Michael, plus music stands and recorder, can get down the steps into the room proper. Anyone wanting to listen will have to sit on the stairs.

The three men rehearse for an hour or so, deciding on how many repeats they will do. Max has prepared ornaments for all four, which is the number the score calls for, but is hesitant about singing so many. Ed and Michael like the ornamentation, however, and do not want him to cut any of it out. So four repeats it is.

Then it is time for dinner. The heat is visibly getting to everybody – except Max who always manages at least to appear neat and cool. "You always look as though you were about to go yachting," complains Edward Parmentier.

After dinner, to the Con again for an interview with Public Radio, in conjunction with tomorrow's recital at Fairchild. The broadcaster sets up his apparatus in one of the classrooms and announces "The Early Music Scene in America."

Michael says that America followed Europe in this area and later on developed its own style. Edward adds that styles are different

around the country and that America took the lead in building harpsichords and organs. Max is introduced as a pioneer in the vocal field. He is asked if there is an American school of vocal performers or whether people go to Europeans like himself for guidance. Max says that in performance Holland is one of the most important places. He is often treated “like a god from a foreign planet – they drink the words out of my mouth.” But in matters of background information, Americans know a great deal. They are well-trained in matters of culture and hungry to absorb it. Max expects the American vocal Baroque scene to be independent soon – “to show its own face.”

Edward asks why the vocalists here are trailing behind. Max states that this is the case everywhere, not just in America. Leonhardt and Harnoncourt are very well-trained instrumentalists. They know exactly what they want and how to get it out of people. They just took singers as they saw fit. I happened to be able to translate what they wanted into vocal terms. Vocalists are often more traditionally-minded; they tend not to be adventurous.

Edward: Higher education and early music don’t go together in this country. There are growing pains. But to operate outside Academia is financially impossible. How is the early music scene supported in Europe?

Max: Brüggem, Bijlsma, Leonhardt, happen to be Europeans; happen to be Dutch. They were already known and gradually started from inside the conservatories where they already were.

Michael: Foreign students come because of the teachers’ international fame.

Interviewer: How about public acceptance and support?

Max: Yes, well, it’s a year-round Holland Festival. Not a curiosity any more. The public and performers are beginning to get a little bit blasé.

Interviewer: Is it still a side-line and a curiosity in the U.S.?

Michael: Yes, there is a different response to recordings. We produce very, very little – especially of American groups.

Edward: The traditional habits of the recording industry...

Max: Recordings are made in the U.S. and Japan. The whole scene there depends on what records are available. In Holland we have so many small consorts that never make records but perform quite often. Building up one's career locally is important there.

Interviewer: Are they performers and teachers?

Max: The number of musicians who can live on only their performances is limited, so almost all teach. They teach either at a music school, which is for amateurs, or a conservatory, which is for professionals.

Interviewer: What do you do in real life?

Michael: I'm a teacher at Oberlin and in Ann Arbor I have a publishing company and play with the Ars Musica group – flute and recorder.

Edward: Harpsichord, The Collegium at the University of Michigan, harpsichord and organ. And a conductor in Ann Arbor.

Edward talks about “freshness” – early music is the newest. As new as music composed last week. He adds that worrying about sources and instruments should not be confined to early music.

Max: We see it in Mozart, the classical period too. Soon it will be Schubert.

The interviewer nods and turns off his machines. Is everybody satisfied with the tape? Everybody is satisfied. Off to Kulas, where Malcolm Bilson will be giving a recital in a few minutes. He has brought his own fortepiano, built by Philip Belt in 1977 and modelled on Mozart's Walter instrument. He had a great deal of trouble with a fortepiano he was called upon to play in Cleveland a few months ago and subsequently decided to bring his own instead of taking any risk. The audience always benefits from such a decision, as any keyboard player, however good, plays better on a familiar instrument. Bilson is magnificent. He plays Mozart, Bach and Haydn and is cheered at the end of the recital. Then Max goes back to the Con to give a private lesson.

Max has decided that Derek Lee Ragin ought to do more with his voice. Derek graduated from Oberlin last year, majoring in piano, and his lovely countertenor was neglected. Derek is now teaching elementary school in his home town, Nashville, and Max feels he should be encouraged to develop his voice instead. Ursula Stechow, who made it possible for him to attend BPI, is obviously one of the first people for him to get in touch with, also the people in charge of scholarships at Oberlin. Max makes several appointments. He has also collected testimonials of Derek's vocal capacities from August Wenzinger, James Caldwell and Nicholas Kenyon, who was utterly charmed at the student concert.

Derek is very diffident about all this, but agrees that if it is made possible, he will spend the coming winter studying languages at some university where he can also find a good voice teacher and then come to Holland to continue his studies with Max in 1982/83. As Max talks to more people and Derek realizes that this is not just some dream, he becomes more and more enthusiastic.

On Tuesday after masterclass, rehearsal in Fairchild (with a look at the new Brombaugh organ there), and a short visit to the ensembles, Max cycles over to the Chapel for the recital. It is due to start at four forty-five and from four-thirty on, when ensembles end, people start coming across Tappan Square. The weather is lovely and, as the doors are not yet open, the prospective audience stands, walks and sits around waiting. Lisa arrives on her ancient Dutch ladies' bike, named Queen Wilhelmina, and Malcolm Bilson borrows it to "see what it feels like." There are quite a lot of bicycles in flat Oberlin but this one, with its heavy frame curved to suit a lady in cumbersome skirts, is unique.

When the doors to Fairchild Chapel open and everyone has found a seat, the pews are full. Edward, Michael and Max give their recital in a relaxed and informal way, announcing each

work and something about it before beginning. There are no programs. All goes well and Michael's recorder doesn't go flat, the way it did yesterday. People remain afterwards to congratulate the three but, as it is almost six p.m. and dinner will not wait, most of the discussion about the music is deferred until the dining room is reached. Edward, Michael and Max can not go yet, though. They have to have their pictures taken. Edward sits at the harpsichord with Max and Michael standing behind it. They look like three solemn schoolboys. Before the photographer can immortalize them like that, I luckily get a fit of the giggles, which helps. Max, stuck between Michael and the harpsichord, can not decide what to do with his hands. He puts one in his pocket and one on the harpsichord, but the photographer objects. So he crosses his arms, as Dutch children were taught to do for school pictures. Max hates posing for more than a few moments.

After dinner there is a faculty rehearsal in Kulas. Max will be singing *Alles Redet jetzt und Singet* for soprano and baritone, with Nancy. The theme is the sounds the animals make after they have been given life. Max is pretty sure this Telemann cantata inspired Haydn's *Creation*.

The day ends with a private lesson, Libby Moore's. Last week Max promised to teach her some relaxing exercises. He checks to see that she is breathing the way he taught her and then he shows her how to feel her pulse. He makes her feel the path her breath has to take – throat to diaphragm and back, up and down. Max makes her concentrate on breath and sound production. The room is very quiet.

"Legs a little apart so the stomach is free. Start empty and count to six. Breathe for three beats and retain the breath for another three, but hold it by maintaining muscle tension, not in the throat. Later count to eight -four in, hold four, and to ten." Max counts as softly as he can. Then she counts herself to the rhythm of her own heartbeat. As he takes in more and more air, Max unbuckles his belt to make room. Libby should feel the air

pressing her stomach outward. “And fill up at the bottom. A heaving bosom is fine on the stage; actresses have more sex appeal that way, but not for singing purposes. Listen to the beat, concentrate on your own heartbeat. Peace of mind and control of the muscles. You have to believe it for it to work. And do the exercise with some devotion.” (Max sneezes). “Another breath exercise.”

“The next exercise I invented myself,” he says. “You walk up and down breathing in, then sing till you are empty. Then fill up again right away. Do a scale on the vowels first, then on *do-re*—then more forte.”

Max, wearing a raincoat because of the cold, starts to walk loosely around the room. He relaxes every possible muscle – his head hangs down, his arms swing slightly from bowed shoulders. His knees flex only a little and his feet hardly leave the ground as he shuffles back and forth – tensing his leg muscles just enough not to fall. His almost but not quite stumbling progress is accompanied by a soft sound. Somewhere inside himself Max is singing. Not much can be heard of this through the laxly open mouth but by concentrating you can tell that the sound – going up and down on some private scale – has a rhythm connected to the pulse, to the shuffling walk, inwardly directed. Max’s eyes are almost closed. His long lashes almost touch the high cheekbones, the face pale now in spite of his tan. The obvious fatigue is accentuated by the stubble on his cheeks. This complete relaxation is not just good for Libby. After the first startled glance she concentrates on what he is doing, rather than how he looks. The slouching walk, the open raincoat with its belt flapping loose, the tired voice coming from miles away... Edward Parmentier should see him now – not a yacht in sight. Suddenly Max “comes to” and smiles sweetly. “See? Now you try.” But Libby can’t. Not with people around anyway. Promising to try the exercise at home she soon leaves. It is eleven p.m.

The Reviewers, Sunday morning at Ten:

Pauline: The musicians' prime criticism of critics is that they have insufficient information and knowledge of the Baroque esthetic.

Nick Kenyon: It's not a critic's job to be an apologist or PR man for the Baroque, but to be as open minded as possible. The critic should be on the audience's side – not the players'.

(Discussion of wind instruments.) The English say flautist, Americans flutist.

Kenyon on Derek: He has a great future in Handel opera.

A Kenyon anecdote: A symposium on temperament in French (in Canada) with a simultaneous translation into English. The translator (thinking his mike was off): "It all sounds pretty much the same to me."

How much should the critic KNOW? As much as possible.

Kenyon: To go in a state of proud ignorance. The public doesn't do the work, so why should the critic? He won't be in a state to RECEIVE. We are all non-specialists. You can't pretend to be equally informed on all aspects. I feel myself to be a mediator or popularizer. Don't try to be omniscient, but declare your interests.

The Reviewers meet Max and a Counter:

Halfway through Wednesday's masterclass Max has to leave. He has promised to give the reviewers a short lecture on counter-tenors. They are still not very used to counters in the U.S. Max has asked Derek to accompany him and perhaps illustrate some of the technical points he hopes to make about this type of voice. He is greeted formally, so decides to sit on a table. Jim Wierzbicki thanks him for coming and talks about a few of the impromptu sessions the reviewers and musicians have had. Sessions on the difference between playing an authentic instrument and a new one; on temperament. He asks Max to tell the reviewers something about his own background, which Max does in a few sentences, promising them a brochure later. As in

the interview with Public Radio, Max stresses that it was his ability to translate Leonhardt's and Harnoncourt's concepts into vocal terms that started him off in early music. He first listened to Frans Brüggen: "spying upon the instrumentalists" as he calls it. Max stresses that during the Baroque it was the other way around; the vocalists took the lead. The term articulation, for instance, is used by instrumentalists but was originally a vocal term.

Then the subject of vocal production is broached. Jim: There are no castrati around if anyone can help it. How did we get counter-tenors? I think vocal production changed around the time of Cavalli (died 1676)... Was it boy singers, who continued to use boys' voices (carefully) during puberty so they wouldn't have to stop singing? And is it dangerous to sing in a lower voice for counters?

Max: In the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries there were three registers: bass, tenor and counter, which was a falsetto only in practice. You hear the break, but the voice goes down smoothly.

Question: We mentioned castrati before, which was something that existed then but doesn't exist now. It's something we know about from reading but have never really heard. The counter-tenor existed then too, but is now starting to come back. I find the countertenor voice a mystery. I don't know how it works. I would be very grateful if you would explain, using Derek Ragin, who we all heard Saturday night, how that actually happens.

Question: Just to make it more complicated for you, we know at some point that vocal production changed. Probably around the time of Cavalli, they went from the natural voice to what is known as bel canto singing. Is there any way of knowing what that vocal production was? Obviously the countertenor is completely different, but the natural tenor too – does one try to reconstruct the sound?

Max: Well, let me say first that both male and female voices have at least two "stops", two registers, and a man, any and

every man, has some notes in his falsetto – you can do it and I can do it. (Illustrates natural voice, falsetto and yodel). For a man, after puberty, after his voice changes, the lower part or chest register or natural register becomes the normal thing and the falsetto becomes an exception, only heard when he tries to sing or yell very high or loud. But when you cultivate that part of your voice so that you can make a career in that area, it's a whole different story. And this, fortunately, is what an increasing number of singers do. And I've noticed, I've asked all my colleagues (mainly from England because that is the big source of countertenors) in which circumstances they can preserve this part of their voice and develop it, and in almost every case (Derek told me this too) they were first boy singers, in a boys' choir. Then during puberty, during the mutation of the voice, usually throat specialists and voice teachers say: "Don't sing at all during those years, be careful and leave your voice alone because this is a difficult and strange period, just give it time for the mutation and after that if you want to you can start singing again." But if they continue using their boy's voice carefully, through the period of mutation, then they slide slowly into that falsetto register that belongs to the voice anyhow, and thereby enlarge the range. Because what I have is only maybe five, six notes. He has approximately two octaves. And that's what you need, of course, for a career. So if they keep singing carefully throughout puberty they will notice at some point that they are no longer able to sing soprano, but they are still able to sing contralto and that is their falsetto voice. They will speak, after some point, in the lower, masculine voice.

Derek has a question: Why do the doctors always say that if you continue to sing after you are thirteen, fourteen, fifteen, that it will HURT your voice? That's what I'm always afraid might happen to me. They told me if I continued I would injure some vocal nodule or something.

Max: Well, I think this just depends on the way of using your voice. You had been in boys' choirs for many years and even if

you had had no proper singing lessons, all your experience would have given you an instinct about how to use your voice so you don't get sore and tired and so it projects best. You can find these things out by instinct, not only with the help of a teacher. So you probably knew already how to keep from straining or forcing your voice. Because what the doctors describe, those little injuries, you can also get at any age if you misuse your voice. If singers don't have the right technique, they can have the same problems.

Question: The countertenors who have told you they continued to sing through puberty – did they do that with guidance, with teachers, or did they do it on their own despite the warnings?

Max: I guess they were only guided in the most favorable circumstances. Derek, in your case, at your own risk.

Stoddard Lincoln: I know in English choirs it happens naturally because a person singing soprano or alto just wants to stay there. Their voice changes and they're horrified by the situation and just start singing falsetto. And there it is. And the liturgical situation is such that they prefer men in the sanctuary to women and they just stay on. For centuries the countertenor has always been in English choirs. We're just now realizing that it can be used for the solo voice rather than just the choral voice. Nobody tells those kids – they just say "My God, if I sing too low I'm going to be thrown out."

Question: Once a singer is a countertenor, is it dangerous to sing in the masculine voice?

Max: That's a good question. A lot of counters ask it themselves. I have had a couple of students who tried both. They were tenors, or baritones, and I think in most cases in the end they want to stick to one thing. To specialize in one or the other. I only know one case of a guy who is normally a bass, and every now and then he uses his falsetto when people insist or it is needed. But then he has to warm it up for two weeks before a concert.

Question: In your background, Derek, and you're American, have you encountered ridicule and people laughing at the idea of a countertenor? Particularly with your heritage, as black countertenors are unheard of. Or a blatant lack of understanding?

Derek: Well, that too, but I find that a lot of pop and rock singers use a falsetto. But for classical singing, then you're ridiculed. Not here, it's fine here but if I go home and I try to sing a Purcell song, that's different.

Max: Yes, pop and rock, there is a lot of quasi-falsetto or they even do it on purpose. But how about spirituals?

Question: What about crooning? The sort of stuff Bing Crosby used to do. It certainly isn't a full voice – is that a kind of falsetto?

Max: I think we would call that *voix mixte*, a mixing of the two voices.

The very florid music of the Renaissance and Baroque can only be performed if the vocal approach is a little lighter, if it is not all the darkest possible color: heavy, like a weight hanging down. You can't get up very high then, nor do you have the flexibility to get all the coloraturas and trills.

A year or two ago something occurred to me. I saw the record sleeve of *The King of the High C's* – Pavarotti... And on the back it said it wasn't until Rossini's times, I think, that a French tenor called Dupré came to Rossini's house and demonstrated to him that he could sing an A – the tenor high A, just below tenor high C in full chest voice. That was unheard of until then. So tenors obviously never used a full voice up that high; they would go smoothly into their falsetto, like Derek does. So, the tradition that baritones and tenors sing without any falsetto, but use full chest voice to the highest regions, is quite recent. And Rossini didn't like it at all.

Question: Are there certain basic vocal qualities you would consider particularly well suited to Baroque singing? Or could any opera singer step in and retrain himself?

Max: I think one could say that an all-around technique should be very advanced. You should be very well trained for Baroque singing. Mind you, I don't say that you need no technique for Romantic singing, but they focus only on a few aspects of technique; mainly how to increase the volume, carrying power, and how to darken the sound. That is, I think, what they are mainly concerned with. Whereas if a singer is trained in all the aspects of what you can do with a voice, then no matter whether he is performing mainly in Romantic work or opera, if he has this training he could also quite easily do the other repertoire. Some of these aspects of technique are getting the vibrato under control – mostly vibrato isn't talked about in voice training. They just expect a voice to have a certain vibrato by nature and there is nothing you can do about it. Also, if you work very much on volume, the vibrato is almost inevitable. An example is Janet Baker. She has no special kind of vibrato, but she made one record of late-Romantic French music, Reynaldo Hahn and Ravel, and she thought it would be very expressive and appropriate to make it sound almost non-vibrato and it worked perfectly. So she showed she is able to have almost no vibrato. There are always places where you can use this – like Moussorgski's *Children's Corner*, where the Aunt is singing and in contrast where the child sings – with no vibrato. All these matters of agility, coloraturas, trills, trillos (the Italian repeated note), lightening the voice when it goes up and maybe darkening when it comes down, instead of making it dark all over, are all important. Then the technique of diction, so that your consonants are not in the way of your vowels, which would prevent you from projecting well; all this is part of good vocal training, which is sometimes forgotten by those who only concentrate on Romantic opera. Another question brings Max to a discussion of the plans for Derek, which he explains to the reviewers. Clearly the idea that all this takes a lot of time is fairly new to them. A year of this, a year or two of that – Max points out that, even at a later stage,

when Derek is introduced to conductors and starts auditioning, there will usually be about a year between an audition and performing with a group, because concerts are planned that far ahead.

At the end of the session the critics take Derek to lunch. They are clearly fascinated. Max gets his bike and, after the new basket he has treated it to has been duly admired, we go and eat. The weather is too threatening to go all the way to the Reservoir, so we settle for the Inn. I order a bacon and tomato sandwich, Max wants cheese. But we both get bacon and tomato, which he eats resignedly. Even when he is not hoarding energy for a concert, Max is unwilling to make any kind of fuss about not getting what he ordered.

Then he goes to the travel agency to make arrangements for his flight to Vancouver at the end of BPI. Max has a US air-pass, which is quite cheap for Europeans, and will fly to Seattle on it, paying his fare from there to Vancouver. However, the constant threat of an air traffic controllers' strike makes planning difficult.

In the afternoon, ensemble is followed by Artists and Critics; a Symposium. Kulas is packed with young musicians, many of whom have an ax to grind. James Caldwell and James Wierzbicki will have their hands full keeping the discussion general. Some of the musicians do not realize that the reviewers assembled here are precisely not the ones to vent one's spleen on; the critics find it difficult to accept that an attack on a musician is always taken personally and may do a great deal of harm.

James Wierzbicki takes the lead. He outlines the reasons for the Music Critics Association workshop and tells the audience how it works. He introduces the senior critics and says that for the past week the critics (he prefers the word reviewers) have been picking the brains of the faculties of BPI, the Organ Institute and the Fortepiano Workshop, all of whom have been more than generous and cooperative. The critics have also talked to a lot of

students but until today there has been no formal meeting at which the flow of information has been reversed. And that is what this symposium is for: to exchange ideas, to communicate with one another in a way that is very seldom possible. He announces the topic (which he thought of over lunch) as “Expectations and Obligations”.

The panel consists of James Caldwell, August Wenzinger, James Weaver, who is director of the Chamber Music Program at the Smithsonian Institute in Washington, D.C. (and BPI faculty) and Max van Egmond, who was a member of the press early in his career.

The discussion opens with a short statement from each of the participants. Emphasis is put on mutual respect; people should not be suspicious of one another’s motives, says Robert Finn; on the other hand, too many musicians look upon a reviewer as a press agent.

James Caldwell: “You really try to do the best you can and nobody recognizes it.” He quotes a favorable review of an early music group, in which not one word is said about the aims of the artists performing.

James Wierzbicki: They call you up and say ‘I love you and please come to my performance’ – often from the purest of motives, but it makes me uneasy. What they are really saying is ‘Come and say nice things about me and help me get more engagements.’ And I’m not going to be a press agent. On the other hand, we are not out to get you, necessarily, to chew you up into small bits. We’re trying to be honest; we know you are also trying to be honest. We each try to serve music in our own way.

Stoddard Lincoln: This is my zero hour. In the first place, I have been reviewed a lot. When I’m reviewing I wish I were a performer and when I perform I wish I were reviewing. But when I go to a performance as a reviewer, I expect a well-chosen program filled with variety. I don’t expect a historical demonstration. Secondly, I of course expect it to be played well,

and I also expect a certain amount of stylistic accuracy in a performance, whether it be Brahms or Debussy, or whatever it is. I also expect the artist to have some kind of individual interpretation, a personality. Fourthly, I want to be entertained. I want a good show. And when I'm reviewed, I'd like to have the critic zero his readers in on what it's all about, then I want to have the way I play reported accurately. If I make a mess of something I want to have that pointed out. (Not really, but... there again, if I DON'T make a mess of something I want it said.) The third element of a good review is I think some gentle suggestion of something that might improve the performance. Phrasing, programming, projecting tone – something like that, that might be of use. I don't want to read a review in which the reviewer is showing off his wit and knowledge and his style of writing at my expense. We all agree that when you find the one adjective that makes such a hilarious sentence, that you have destroyed the whole purpose of criticism. (James: Stoddard Lincoln began his career as a keyboard player, harpsichord, piano, fortepiano, then became a musicologist and continues Professor of Musicology at Brooklyn College and gives concerts).

Max: So the question is what do I expect from critics. Well, they are a section of the press, they are journalists and we know that the press has two tasks: information and opinion. The same goes for critics. They should give information about the arts and preferably in cooperation with the arts department of the newspaper, they should give this information beforehand, before an exhibition or a concert, so that the readers can prepare themselves. Then they give opinions... Journalists do that about politics, so why not about art? I'm always a little puzzled by the fact that journalists and commentators have such great influence. It is one person who gives an opinion and enormous crowds follow that opinion. This seems to be left over from times past. We know that in a democracy everything is decided by a majority, not by a minority and not at all by one person. The

interesting thing is that the opinions on art are given by one person and if you don't read more than one newspaper or magazine, you stick to that. So, all my life I have been thinking about a system; about how to combine in one newspaper the opinion of several persons; maybe the critic could also quote the general opinion of the audience at a concert. As long as that is not the case, the critic should be very aware of his responsibility. A lot of people, as soon as they see something in print, seem to forget this is one person's opinion – they think that's the way it was. That's why a new Broadway show sometimes closes after a few bad reviews. So, I think that reviewers and journalists – on radio and TV too – should be aware of the enormous influence they have and of their responsibility.

James Weaver: I often think that what we as performers do together as a group is so evanescent, so fleeting, and that the reviewer then has the press in which to make the final statement about what has taken place. No matter how strongly I feel about a performance I have been involved in one way or another, I am always strongly affected by what I see in print. Even if it's a review about which I want to say 'Oh, he didn't know a thing about what was going on,' I find that two days or a week later my mind goes back to the fact that there was this strong statement and it's something I often consider doing something about. If we read the papers at all, we are inevitably moved by what we find in print, in terms of the response the critic has made. What I hope to find when I pick up a review is a sentence written in English that makes some kind of decent reading. I get unhappy when the use of the English language to castigate a performance is so poor that I would perhaps like to write a letter to the editor suggesting that the writer take a remedial course. Apart from that, I would really hope that a critic would prepare himself for certain performances in a way that good critics always do if they are going to hear a major new work for the first time. Or if they're going to witness the restaging of an opera they know pretty well, so that when they hear these

performances they feel really prepared to deal with the subject that is being presented to them. I often feel – and there are many exceptions, please don't think this is a blanket response – that critics these days are hearing a concert played on early instruments with no awareness of what that kind of performance entails. So they will say 'Mr. So-and-So chose to play on such-and-such an instrument' or even less informative than that, as if at some point just before the concert one decides to pick up a Baroque violin rather than a modern violin to play on... I do feel what you are doing here is really AWFULLY GOOD FOR ALL OF US. (Applause).

August Wenzinger: Musicians and critics should be in the same boat. We are the mediators of the art world, bringing it to the public. And a musician is preparing sometimes for months or more, if he has to dig out old manuscripts and make them playable and present proof of the artistic and spiritual world of maybe the sixteenth or seventeenth century.

The critic should also feel responsible for the audience getting the main things out of this world, so it is important that the critic knows in advance what he is writing about. That he can really judge whether the performer got to the core of this work and was able to evoke it and make it understandable for the audience. Because that is not always the case. There are bad performances, which should be reviewed severely, but there are good performances where one feels the critic was not really prepared and can't write about it.

Frank Ruby: I don't agree with what was said before, so my task is quite easy. I try, when I write a review, to give the essence of the program so that the people who weren't there will know what went on. You make it a little better, so they wish they had come. Unfortunately for music criticism, you don't have a lot of specific impact. By the time you've reviewed something, the quintet has gone off to Chicago or someplace and people can't say 'gee, I'll go tonight.' A movie critic can do that. Do I listen for all the wrong notes and then have some sort of a sliding

scale, and if there are eighteen wrong notes I give a C minus? No, I don't. I try to give the spirit of the thing. Unfortunately we are asked to review all kinds of music and I'm not an authority by any means on early music. Now that early music is blossoming, audiences are getting larger and this means I will be covering more of it. I was once told: If there are more people on stage than in the audience, don't cover it. Now that early music is getting to the stage where there are more people in the audience than on the stage, I'll have to brush up on what it is and the funny names... there is a great tendency to make plays on names with those early instruments – you have to be careful not to do it.

The discussion becomes general, starting with the subject of taste. Twentieth-century string sound is mentioned and Stoddard Lincoln throws in a question. What if a critic, hearing the Baroque string sound, is sickened by it? What then? (General laughter). Must a critic sit there and pretend? He obviously has to try and judge it on its own terms but it's a tremendous problem for some critics, we know. And there's nothing you can do about this.

Jim Wierzbicki: We have a burning response coming up now from Bilson (in the body of the hall).

Malcolm Bilson: I want to take the question still further than that. I've got so I can absolutely not bear to listen to virtually any string quartet. I won't mention who it was, but one of the very best string quartets came to play at Cornell and my description of sitting there and listening to that was, if that was a car, I'd think the engine's no good. Such constant wobbling these people do on their strings! (Terrific applause).

The hall now joins in on the matter of taste. Someone mentions a review of a recital in which a Steinway and a harpsichord were used, entitled "Beauty and the Beast". Another person discusses the dilemma of "head versus heart", which, according to him, occurs most often with vocal music. "One half of me is sitting there scandalized and the other half is prostrated. If you're

honest you will write this. It was no good historically but on its own terms it worked, it moved me.”

On the other hand, a musician points out, how many of the musicians who have been working now, some of them, for twenty years on authentic performance practice, are still capable of being moved by a traditional performance of early music? “I’m not,” states the musician. “I’m totally turned off.” “Really?” One of the reviewers, to whom this side of the coin has never been turned up, is fascinated. Food for thought. There are many nods of assent from the hall.

James Wierzbicki recalls last Saturday morning’s “back to back” demonstrations of modern and early instruments. Catharina Meints told him then that in daily life most of the instrumentalists switched back and forth. She is herself a good example of this, being a member of the Cleveland Symphony Orchestra. Wierzbicki points out that very few professionals can afford, financially, to play early instruments only. Musicians have to be musicians in general; most critics have to be general critics, writing in daily life about all kinds of music. “Stoddard is a specialist – he writes only about early music. I write, in the course of one week, about everything from Stockhausen to Bach played on early instruments, to Bach played on modern instruments.”

“But it’s hard,” a youthful member of the audience says, “to get shot down just because the critic doesn’t understand.”

There are two kinds of critics in the world, it is pointed out.

There are those who reflect the taste of the audience and those who lead the way.

“Any reviewer who wouldn’t have the guts to give an honest but unfavorable review of one of the gods of the moment shouldn’t be in his job,” says a reviewer. “It’s the same old Harry Truman syndrome; if you can’t stand the heat, get out of the kitchen.”

Jim Wierzbicki: Bill Steinberg, who was with us last week, said that in San Francisco he was having to deal with a problem of nineteenth-century performance practice. The standard way of

playing a certain trumpet solo in George Gershwin's *American in Paris* was the jazzy way – notes inégales. In fact, there is a 1929 recording in which Gershwin is playing the celeste or something, in which it is played evenly. And when the Scott Joplin revival came about there was a great controversy between Joshua Rivkin who played straight and Mary Lou Williams who played swingy. I don't know the cut-off date...

Well, there is at least one other matter that enters into this, that is the printed notation. The printed score of anything from a Monteverdi opera to a Mahler symphony doesn't come near telling you everything you have to know... and when you're dealing with early music the scores are really just bare-bones skeletons. You need a lot more artistic imagination. I think I referred to this in something I wrote not long ago as "creative musical archeology". Filling in the gaps in the score. As you get closer to modern times you need less to rely on the kind of scholarship necessary for early music.

Someone offers an anecdote about his high school days, about having listened to some performer's interpretation of Mozart on records with great pleasure until one day he bought the scores and was horrified – "I loved it – and it wasn't right."

Max: "I loved it and it wasn't right... That brings me to this question. Could the critics tell me, has it occurred to you what to do if you have to write about a performer who, let's say, you like very much or maybe are almost in love with – artistically or personally – (roars of laughter) or the other way around, somebody you absolutely hate. Or a style that you absolutely hate. Up to which point do you go and do your job and when do you say 'Well, I'd better send a colleague because I am no longer objective?' And I ask this in connection with what I called earlier the great responsibility – what Lisa calls the megaphone effect."

The chairman asks for a response and gets a reviewer who is worried about the degree of vibrato used by Bilson's quartet:

“there must have been some vibrato in Mozart’s times; would you get a top quartet doing something that wrong?”

Someone else adds that Mozart himself played the violin, that he probably took liberties with his work we wouldn’t take. If he played a piece differently the first time and the second, which then is the right style? Was he aiming at an audience that knew his music or that didn’t? You have to take all this into consideration.

Max: “I’m sorry, but I was asking you about your love life.”

Answer: “That’s good too.”

Question from the hall: “What recourse does a musician have for a review that distorts or castigates the ensemble?” Answer:

“Well, you can write to the editor and suggest he be fired. I don’t write (I think) nasty reviews so I don’t get that kind of feedback. I don’t know if I’m answering your question. I find that the higher you go up the professional ladder, the less feedback, complaining or disagreement you get from them. The most vicious letters I get when I didn’t please someone, come from the lower professional ranks. If you’re talking about an organisation like an opera company, by the time they get high enough to be worth reviewing they generally know where they stand. I don’t really believe that a music critic has ever sunk anybody. Or ruined a career. I really don’t.” Several names are called out from the hall.

New speaker: “I’m not so much worried about reviewers who are vicious as reviewers who are incompetent. What can you do?” Answer by Mr. Wenzinger: “I once wrote to a newspaper; I had played a Tartini concerto for the gamba, with the composer’s authentic cadenzas. A reviewer wrote: The performance was quite good but the cadenzas were out of style. So I wrote and told him that the cadenzas were written by Tartini, but that I was convinced the critic was right.” Several people talk on this subject; a few make suggestions on how to inform local reviewers about the early music scene. It is pointed out that one

cannot expect small-town papers to have specialized reviewers – maybe the New York Times – but that it is possible.

James warns the musicians that this is a very specialized, esoteric branch of music they are involved in. It's very difficult to understand. There are also other branches of music, which you tend to forget.

Then, as the dining room will close in half an hour, the discussion has to stop. Max is not too satisfied; his own question has not been answered and an answer to the following one, recourse one has against a bad reviewer, has not been given either. On the other hand, the people here today can hardly be blamed for the unprofessional conduct of other reviewers; the mere fact that they are here proves that they want to learn what is going on. However, most of them seem unwilling to face the fact that they are indeed capable of causing extensive personal damage.

Nicholas Kenyon's words during a discussion last weekend come to mind: "There is this terrible feeling of fairness to the performers." "Debuts? On the whole I try not to go to that sort of thing."

After dinner, at which, the discussion is continued at almost every table, there is a faculty rehearsal. *Alles Redet jetzt und Singet* is a cantata for soprano, baritone, two flutes, oboe, bassoon, strings and continue. Mr. Wenzinger is sitting in the front row of Kulas. He is a bit worried about the seating of the instrumentalists. Can Marilyn McDonald (the leader) be seen? OK. Try the beginning. After a few bars both oboists stop playing and register dismay. Again. 4-1 says Wenzinger. Nancy starts her first aria. And stops. Not so good. She stands there looking sad. The oboes are drowning out the flutes. "Why don't you guys just pretend you're playing?" suggests Michael Lynn. "Will the oboes play softer and the strings louder?" asks Wenzinger. Bob Willoughby is having trouble. He moves over behind the strings. Perhaps that will help the balance. Sarah Sumner's violin squeaks and she makes a horrible face. Nancy

goes flat and begins to wail. Try again. Better. Then Max gets up for his recitative, the signal for Kenneth Slowik to remove his huge violone (bass viol, Baroque counterpart of the double bass) and for the wind players and a violinist to go down into the body of the hall. Max continues, ignoring the moves. In measure sixteen Lisa suddenly asks him what he is doing. "That should be a natural." Max looks at his score, nods, encircles the offending note with a red pencil. The natural doesn't sound right, though. "I am convinced we have to alter this," decides Wenzinger. Then they go on: aria, duet, a recitative by Nancy. Max suddenly stands up to snap her picture with his small camera, which no one had noticed. Nancy breaks into laughter at the sudden FLASH. Her song is full of bird sounds, the onomatopoeic notes beautifully echoed by Bob Willoughby's flute. Then as she finishes, the tape deck on a chair in the third row clicks off. Perfect timing. The tape is turned over for Max's recitative and Nancy leaves Kulas to restore her circulation. The hall is freezing this evening. Michael Lynn, rushing back in for the recitative, almost knocks her down. Max starts to sing. Wenzinger is dissatisfied with the accompaniment. "A crescendo!" he cries. "Pah PAH. Could we do it again?" He walks onto the stage with his score, wanting to point something out to Max. He drops the page which, being attached to the next one, carries it to the floor. Slowly the score, taped together in accordion folds, slides downward. Gazing in mock horror, August Wenzinger dramatically hurls the remaining sheets away. Max offers his. But Wenzinger, still holding half his score, backs down the three steps to the auditorium, trailing the score behind him. It unfolds as he goes up the side aisle and he reaches the back of the hall before the first page that fell near the stage starts to move. The stifled giggles have become roars of laughter. Max snaps a picture, and another, as the director starts to fold his way back down the aisle. James Weaver, entering, looks quite startled at having to edge his way along the new

Telemann carpet. “Go on,” says Wenzinger, grinning, and the music recommences.

There is a duet, with a very strange note for the oboe. “A misprint, but play it as it is,” Wenzinger decides. “How should it be?” someone wants to know. “You see it is difficult because the singers sing triplets – just play as the singer sings.” Oh.

The duet ends and James Caldwell cries out “Oh, please, please, let’s do that again – we went off somewhere.” The beat is completely different for instrumentalists and singers. Everybody is counting. The singers have to start in the middle of a measure, just after dead silence. Max suggests nodding his head as a signal.

*Alles redet jetzt und singet*; All the birds are now chattering and singing. The radiant cantata describes the birth of a new day, of a new spring, in terms of the sleeping world awakening to birdsong. The wonder of creation is shown musically in the various bird calls given to the instruments and vocalists. Sing praise, give thanks for creation, is the theme. This cantata, of course, predates Haydn’s *Creation*.

It is such a joyous thing and ends so suddenly in an instrumental rendition of a cuckoo sleepily sounding a final note that the audience in Kulas on the Friday night of the actual performance bursts into delighted cries of its own and resounding applause.

By then, the cantata is beautifully performed.

In the meantime, this rehearsal is over and many of those present head for Gibson’s and ice cream.

One of the highlights of the last week is a long lunchtime conversation with Stoddard Lincoln, partly about Max’s work in the United States and partly about a catalog of music to Restoration plays which Stoddard is compiling.

Music for a play was often written by several composers and, although the songs Purcell wrote are readily available, the other songs from the plays, by different composers, often are not.

Stoddard had to search high and low for a lot of them. When the catalog is finished it should prove invaluable to theater groups wanting to perform authentic and complete Restoration plays. Max suggests that perhaps the Holland Festival would be interested. An American or British acting company with Dutch Baroque musicians should be able to put on quite a show, if the Festival puts up the money.

The conversation then moves back to Purcell and what might have happened to English music if he had lived longer and Cromwell had been less of a fanatic. Operas! Oratorios! Dreamily munching on bacon and tomato sandwiches, the two musicians can just see it.

Stoddard has recently unearthed an unknown oratorio by Eccles which has as yet only been performed in Oxford, but which he has not yet finished editing. He would like Max to have a look at it, considering Max's theories on quasi-parlando and secco recitatives. It has everything from half notes to thirty-seconds given and Max agrees that if the composer gives it to you, you use it.

Harnoncourt and his use of boy sopranos is the next topic. Max admits they are not always good. He mentions that Bach always has a lot of unison accompaniment by the winds for soprano and alto voices and says he believes this to be in support of boys' voices, not yet fully trained. This kind of accompaniment is never found for tenor or bass. The choir didn't have much time for practicing either, he says. Probably only the one week between Sundays. They must have had difficulty in learning their parts. In answer to a question, Max says he sees no reason for keeping the accompaniment in unison when adult female voices are used, if this is really the reason for it. Stoddard Lincoln is relieved. This does not sound as fanatical as he had feared Max might be. They go on to the emotion expressed in the Passion arias and how much of it or of intellectual understanding can be expected of a young boy. Max remarks that the onset of puberty was later in the seventeenth and eighteenth

centuries and Stoddard says “It must be all these vitamins.” He sounds approving, which is odd in a person who had complained his way through breakfast on the subject of those who force one to eat healthily – who WANTS uncooked vegetables, anyway? was his lament.

Baroque trumpets are next on the agenda. They sound fine on the cut, spliced and edited tapes they make records from, but listen to them during a live performance and you won’t always enjoy it. Recollections of sounds past are interrupted by Malcolm Bilson. He wants to practice.

As the three week Baroque Performance Institute draws to a close, people start saying goodbye. Max tends to avoid such scenes, but is disarmed when suddenly presented with a home-thrown mug at Libby’s last private lesson. They will meet again on the West Coast in January, says Max, and he will want to hear what progress she has made.

There is another faculty dinner and Max also takes the Crawfords out to show his appreciation of their hospitality. Max has a few more people to talk to about Derek’s future. His conversation with Mr. Clarke at the Development Office and with Mrs. Stechow who made Derek’s stay at BPI possible, are very satisfactory. Derek is going to get the help he deserves. He and several other young singers are scheduled for Amsterdam within the next couple of years. But Derek will spend the coming year working at his languages in Maryland first.

There is very little time for swimming and the weather is not too good, but Max, winding up BPI, recording *Du aber, Daniel* for Gasparo and rehearsing with Jim Weaver for *Schwanengesang* in August and with Malcolm Bilson for *Winterreise* in January, is really too busy anyway.

He celebrates the Fourth of July with the Crawfords and their neighbors and then he is off to Washington state.

In Seattle Max has a few days off, time for a little sun and exercise. Then on to Vancouver, where he is teaching from the 12<sup>th</sup>

to the 19<sup>th</sup> of July. The Vancouver Early Music Program goes on till the end of July, but Max feels that a week is enough for him – this is only the second of his four masterclasses this summer. He has thirteen students: ten Canadians and three from the U.S. Harpsichord and fortepiano teacher is Colin Tilney, from Great Britain; Mary Springfels from the U.S. teaches gamba and cello, and Kees Boeke from Holland, traverso and recorder. Paul O’Dette, the lutanist with whom Max discussed coming to Vancouver during a train trip last winter, and with whom he will be appearing at Lincoln Center next January, is not here this week.

The Vancouver Early Music Program takes place at the music department of the University of British Columbia. The program is an annual event, sponsored jointly by the Department of Music and the Vancouver Society for Early Music, to which Max is no stranger. As part of the program there is an Early Music Festival of Baroque and Renaissance music – six concerts in July, open to the public. The program is financially assisted by the governments of Canada and British Columbia, the City of Vancouver, the CBC Vancouver Chamber Orchestra, various foundations and even the B.C. Lottery Fund.

Facilities here are not quite as good as in Oberlin. The teachers have no private studios, there are fewer rooms available for classes and rehearsing, and there are fewer instruments. As in Oberlin, the students can choose between living on campus or off and there are meals available for those who want them. The University of British Columbia has two huge swimming pools, indoor and outdoor, to make up for its slight deficiencies, and even a gym, sauna and steam bath. Pure bliss for Max. The beach is too far for him to go more than once.

The daily schedule is like Oberlin’s – masterclasses in the morning, a noontime break, ensembles in the afternoon, and faculty rehearsals at night. Max will give a solo recital with Colin Tilney on the Hammerklavier and harpsichord and Mary Springfels, gamba, at the end of the week.

The accompanists at Vancouver are not such accomplished sight-readers as those at BPI and Max cannot really expect too much improvement from any of the singers in the one week he is teaching. (The students may well improve by taking his lessons to heart, but that will not be noticeable until some time later.) Ensembles are left to the students to form and this seems less satisfactory than at BPI – it takes longer and is less orderly. Max is staying with friends who live about half an hour's bus ride from the campus. He does not get outside much but, as it is cooler and less sunny than in Oberlin, it does not worry him. The student concert at the end of the week is hastily planned and put together and takes place while Max is rehearsing for his own concert that same evening. That is too bad. But the enthusiasm with which the Vancouver recital is greeted makes up for some of the frustration.

At half past eight on the evening of July 17<sup>th</sup>, Max, Colin Tilney and Mary Springfels give their concert in the Recital Hall of the Music Building. Max sings Monteverdi and six Constantijn Huygens songs, telling the audience something about the latter, including how to pronounce the composer's name. Then Colin Tilney and Mary play Handel's *Suite in e minor* and Max sings Purcell's *Lord, What is Man?* The intermission is followed by a Haydn sonata and six more songs: two Italian ones, two German songs and finally *The Wanderer* and *Piercing Eyes*. The concert is a great success. Although it is too long, the program seems well-balanced and never tiring – for the audience that is. Max is bushed.

The following Wednesday the Vancouver Courier prints a long review by Cynthia Ashton, under the heading VAN EGMOND SUPERB, in which she praises the performance unstintingly, except for the repertoire which was “perhaps... on the heavy side... for a North American audience,” she adds with great honesty.

Colin Tilney<sup>f</sup>'s beautiful performance of Handel's *Suite* is also praised lavishly, as is the fortepiano *Sonata*. Both instruments

come in for their share of attention. They were built by Kenneth Bakeman of Seattle, who modelled the harpsichord on a 1650 instrument by Johannes Couchet. This instrument belongs to the collection of the Department of Music and is an object of great pride.

By then Max is beginning to relax. He has about a week off before leaving Canada and spends as much time as possible outside, walking, swimming, sitting in the sun. He is also supposed to be studying for his Schubert recital with James Weaver in Ipswich on August 2<sup>nd</sup>, not to mention the role of Polyphemus he is singing in Handel's *Acis and Galatea* two weeks later. For a few days anyway, he seems to manage to push future engagements out of his mind.

By the last weekend in July, Max is back in the U.S. He spends the weekend with James Weaver in Washington D.C. Between rehearsals with Jim (who has a swimming pool!) Max does some sightseeing. He also manages to convince his colleague that there is something to this health kick after all, and leaves for New York with Jim's promise to take a cold shower following a hot one for the sake of resistance to colds.

New York is hot, but not too hot. Coffee at the sidewalk café between the West Side Y and Lincoln Center. Max sits and looks at Alice Tully Hall, where he will be performing in January but, although he has never been there, he does not go in. He is curious enough to ask friends who know the place about it, however.

Museums, *Amadeus* at the Broadhurst Theater, which he enjoys hugely, and rowing in Central Park – something Max looks forward to in New York in the summer, ever since his first trip there in 1969.

On Thursday July 30<sup>th</sup>, he takes a train to Boston and a bus for the remaining twenty miles. Destination: Ipswich, Massachusetts.

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## Castle Hill

The Castle Hill Festival has been an annual program of the Castle Hill Foundation since 1972. Castle Hill is the Crane Estate, a one hundred and sixty-five acre property overlooking the Atlantic, seven miles outside Ipswich, Massachusetts.

At the top of the hill stands the Great House, a pseudo-Tudor, neo-Gothic, loco-Rococo pile. The original Crane was a plumber who built the place for his wife on the proceeds of a highly successful patented plumbing device. He first had an Italian Renaissance building erected for her, but she didn't like it and it was drafty, too. So he had it pulled down and the present structure put up instead. Nowadays it is run as a banqueting and wedding facility all year round.

The estate is part of a trust which has about sixty-five properties around Boston, of which this is one of the biggest. The grounds are run by the Trustees of Reservations who look after the flora and fauna. The entire area is a game preserve and Festival activities are usually audited by a variety of extremely curious deer and smaller animals. The most obtrusive of these are the woodchucks who, with some justice, regard the place as their own to dig holes in. If other animals choose to fall into them, this is certainly not the woodchucks' fault.

The Hill is quite densely wooded, except the front lawn of the Great House, where a wide expanse of green runs far down the hill in what is called the Grand Allée. Near the Great House there are statues along the edges of the Allée and it culminates in a kind of terrace overlooking the Casino. Past the Casino the lawn continues for another mile or so and overlooks the Atlantic and the beach. The edges of the lawn are heavily wooded, creating the picturesque style so beloved of eighteenth-century

England; “where grove nods to grove”. Just the place for a Baroque opera – which is coming up.

Driving the five miles from the town of Ipswich (two main streets including a movie house, a couple of super markets, a drugstore with a real soda fountain, closed in the evening and most of Sunday, though; a laundromat and several eateries with a predominance of Greek food), one heads for Crane’s Beach. Careful on these roads; they are full of beachgoing racing bikes, tame deer with the right of way and concealed entrances to some pretty impressive houses. This is a wealthy area.

Just before you get to the beach (the Trustees of Reservations charge you \$5.50 to park your car – the place has to be kept up and erosion is a constant danger here), you cross the road and try to enter the Crane Estate through a large gate. Unless you arrive just before a concert, however, the gate will be locked. But there is another one and if you really have business there, in you go.

There are several private houses on or near the circular drive and beyond them is the Barn, where classes and concerts are held.

Up the drive you come to the Brown Cottage, which is a large brown cottage and this is where the administrative heart of the Castle Hill Festival beats – quite wildly at times. Entering, you usually stumble over some domestic object like a pail or bath towel or otherwise over the toys left around by Alison, age two.

Inside, we go right to the office rather than left to the kitchen and find ourselves in a room full of people, tickets, posters and telephones, typewriters and other office equipment. In spite of the paraphernalia and the serious determined faces of the persons inside, the impression is one of a bunch of people sitting around.

Nevertheless, my enquiries about tickets yield exactly what I want to obtain. One of the characteristic things about Castle Hill, I find later, is precisely this: everything works, but it is a source of constant amazement that it does.

Upstairs is Tom Kelly, the musical director and yet another North Carolinian. We have come to reconnoiter, as this part of my summer is to be shared with Frans, my husband, and our daughter Emmy who is going to Max's masterclass. When Tom has found out what he wants to know concerning my way of working – he was worried that my activities would interfere with classes and is, I hope, reassured – the conversation turns to Handel's chamber opera *Acis and Galatea*, an exciting project. Tom has been working mostly on the score, not the staging. Dene Barnett, who teaches Baroque theater gesture at Flinders University in Adelaide, Australia, is going to coach the singers, but nobody has really thought about the designs yet. When he hears that Frans, who is an architect, does a lot of stage designing for the English Speaking Theatre of Amsterdam, Tom's eyes begin to gleam. Would Frans perhaps consider... Frans most certainly would. (He has yet to discover that he will be building the set as well as designing it). We can look up contemporary designs in the Performing Arts Library in New York when we go there next week and Frans can make a sketch of the outdoor stage to take with him. Tom gives us directions for finding the Casino, which is where the outdoor performances take place. "Go up the drive, through the green gate," he says, "and the next architectural event up the hill is it." We follow directions. From the road, the Casino is what happens to the Grand Allée after the terrace at the end of the Great House lawn. That is, going down the lawn from the Great House, you finish up on the terrace and, if you want to risk your neck on the crumbling stairs leading down on either side of it, you're in the Casino. The place consists of three high archways in a façade, flanked by two classical-looking bath houses. The area in front of the façade is now grass with a rectangular white stone edging. This marks the place where Mr. Crane's swimming pool was filled in. The pseudo-Classico-Palladian entourage, with its very real friable walls (plaster outdoors, unprotected against the salty

Atlantic winds), is perfect for a pastoral. Tape measure, sketching pad and drawing pen appear.

Max turns up at Castle Hill from New York on July 30<sup>th</sup>; he can become acclimatized during the weekend. The entertainment offered at the Festival this weekend is called *A Carrousel for the Emperor* and consists of a superb eighteenth-century equestrian dancing exhibition, with music by an ad hoc ensemble called the Castle Hill Festival Wind Band, and a lot of outdoor theater. The grounds are opened to the public at six and they are encouraged to picnic on the Grand Allée. The Wind Band, which includes a real serpent, is dressed in what looks like Continental Army garb and plays during the meal. Then the large audience is encouraged to follow the music to that area in which the play, music or dressage will take place. A lot of people have come, so each performance is held twice and the audience is split up so that everyone can see everything. The mechanics of the movements around the grounds, from Italian garden to Casino to Grand Allée, have been worked out beforehand and the Festival committee members with their helpers, mainly young volunteers from the neighborhood, communicate by walkie-talkie.

As it gets dark, we watch a fascinating dressage performance, the horses dancing to the music of Baroque wind instruments. Later, there is a performance of Handel's *Music for the Royal Fireworks* in the Casino. By then most of the audience is sitting or lying on the ground on blankets and, as the music finishes, a short but dazzling display of fireworks provides a grand finale to a memorable evening. And it will all be done again tomorrow! Saturday is a day for rehearsing alone and going to the beach. Crane's beach is just a few minutes' walk from the estate, but Max is even faster on a borrowed bike.

After dinner at the Brown Cottage, Max sits down on the stone wall surrounding the terrace to wait for Jim Weaver, who is arriving from Ithaca, New York, for their concert tomorrow afternoon. They will not be able to practice much tonight, in the Carrousel bustle, but in the morning they can work. After the

(five-thirty) concert, Jim will go straight back to Ithaca where he has a “Biber and such” concert on Monday. After greeting him, Max goes to part of the show and then early to bed – only to be woken by the fireworks. Max is staying with a family just down the road from the Crane estate.

On Sunday morning after brunch (blueberry muffins, Max’s favorites), he and Jim head for the Barn to rehearse Schubert’s *Schwanengesang*. The Barn seats several hundred people and has an improvised platform which, being hollow, has to be trodden carefully when someone is taping. Even the sound of Max’s foot softly tapping the beat, is audible. For sessions like this one, a flat board with working lights is suspended above the instrument so that the player and the singer can see. The rest of the Barn is lit only by the sunshine through the screen doors.

The fortepiano is a copy of a Conrad Graf of Vienna, the exact date of which is unknown. Usually the date is inscribed with the name, but not on this instrument. The reproduction was built here in Massachusetts in 1979 by Robert Smith.

The instrument sounds awful. “All forte and no piano,” complains Jim. Anthony St. Pierre, who has stayed an extra day after playing in the Wind Band, just so that he could help if something like this happened, promises to work on the instrument during the afternoon.

In the meantime, Jim makes do. He has to hold down both pedals all the time, instead of just for special effects. The left moderator has no lock, but this is the only way to play even slightly piano. He and Max go through the entire cycle of fourteen songs. “Are there any notes not damping?” asks Anthony. “None in particular...”

“Frühlingssehnsucht” is the hardest for Jim, he says. “It says ‘langsam’ and you sing it so fast; it sounds great, though,” he adds. He plays even faster – “too fast,” he says. “One overcompensates by making it even more difficult – which is wrong.” Max, minimally garbed in a cotton shirt open to the

waist, shorts and beach sandals, stands in an unventilated barn in August, earnestly proclaiming his longing for Spring.

Max has a couple of low notes, very low for evening, but the concert is at half past five, luckily. When they reach the last of the songs for which Ludwig Rellstab composed the lyrics, there are some problems. “Abschied” (Farewell) has to be done again. It seems odd to have a farewell song in the middle of a cycle, but “Schwanengesang” (Swan Song), as Max will explain later to the audience, was not composed as a cycle at all – it simply consists of fourteen songs Schubert had not published before he died; hence the name. The first seven have lyrics by Rellstab, songs eight to thirteen are by Heinrich Heine and include the famous “Ständchen”, which Max sometimes sings by itself as an encore to a Romantic recital, and the last is by Seidl.

After the rehearsal Tom Kelly wants to know if Jim has brought clothes to wear for the recital. Castle Hill has pleated white dress shirts in all sizes, just in case. But Jim has come prepared. By recital time he is wearing a long shirt-jacket with a blue and black batik design over black trousers. Max is all in white, except for a red webbing belt. They look great, having had a quiet afternoon including the beach and a rest. By quarter to five Jim is in the Barn; the fortepiano sounds much better after Anthony’s ministrations.

The working lights have been removed and a sad-looking fern placed on the stage. The floor is clean, the chairs have been set up and Max, who used a stool in the morning, now has a real music stand. As Jim gets his fingers used to the fortepiano, Max can be heard warming up in the side room. The droopy fern is replaced by a vase of wild flowers.

A busload of people is deposited at the barn door. Tables have been set up here so that the audience can have drinks and get their programs. There is a program for each week, so this one includes the Carrousel as well as today’s concert. The first few pages are about the Festival itself, a page on Tom Kelly, one about the estate and one on the foundation. The Castle Hill

Foundation is a non-profit membership organization which, predictably, would like more members. In Europe, a Festival like this one would be eligible for various kinds of grants, but not here. The Festival must pay its own way and relies on donations for additional funds. There is a whole page of benefactors listed in the program, and another of the various boards and committees involved. Local business supports the Festival too, witness the pages and pages of ads. In the middle there are thirteen pages devoted to “A Carrousel for the Emperor”, including information for the audience on what the Band plays as it leads them from the Italian Garden to the Casino, or vice versa. Everybody and everything is mentioned, including two pages on the subject of the “Equestrian participants” with the history of dressage and the name, breeding and height of each horse. All this is followed by two facing pages of which one says Castle Hill Festival, Tom Kelly, *Schwanengesang* and gives the date. The other gives us the text-writers and their dates, the names of the songs, Schubert’s name and, at the very bottom, “Max van Egmond, baritone, James Weaver, pianoforte”. Either this audience knows all there is to be known about Schubert, the cycle, the instrument and the soloists, or horses are of more interest around here than music. More busloads of people arrive. Most of the buses and all the private cars are parked in special areas, but the elderly are brought to the door. They walk around or find their seats, some of them bringing along their hard plastic cups of beer or coke and even the cans the drinks came in. This is bound to lead to trouble and does. For the next two weeks each and every musical event in the Barn will be disturbed at least once by somebody knocking over or stepping on a cup or can. Urgent suggestions to Tom that the ushers ask people not to bring in drinks, that the drinks be poured into polystyrene cups outside and the cans kept there – all meet with his approval, but nothing is done. There is a lot of grumbling but no action.

As the Barn fills, it becomes clear that this is at least partly a non-musical audience. A lot of the civic groups supporting the festival truck their members in for Sunday afternoon concerts, regardless of what is being offered. Many people are not regular concert-goers and Max explains to them what a song cycle is. Most listen attentively, very willing to enjoy themselves, but a few people are restless. It is more than possible that the uncomfortable wooden chairs are partly responsible. Smack in the middle of one of the songs, an elderly couple get up and shuffle slowly past the front of the stage to the exit the furthest away from them. Max continues to sing but his eyes follow their departure. Jim's mouth is open and his eyes glaze slightly, but he too keeps playing. What else? The audience is entranced with "Der Doppelgänger". The eerie music with its spooky text about a man who meets his double, can be followed in English by the audience, which has been given a translation of the texts at the entrance. "Du Doppelgänger!" sings Max, registering fear and awe – the Barn is tensely silent. Crack! There goes another cup. After the concert, which goes well apart from the catastrophes mentioned, Jim and Max receive the congratulations of colleagues and friends. They come out of the Barn into the warm evening sun and start up the hill to the Brown Cottage where dinner will be served.

The buses fill up with passengers, who sit beaming down on the musicians. Max waves exuberantly and many of the concert-goers wave back as they are driven away. He and Jim are joyous. In spite of the interruptions they worked well together; the result, they decide, of mutual inspiration.

For the next few days Max has some time to himself. He needs to learn his role as Polyphemus in *Acis and Galatea* by heart and has brought a tape of the opera to practice with, as there will be no orchestra until the end of the week. He wanders around the estate with his cassette recorder in the back pocket of his shorts, a dangling wire leading to the huge headphones he is wearing. His eyes are fixed on the Novello score, he carries a pencil and

his lips move constantly. People and cars manage to avoid him, but he occasionally bumps into some object.

*Acis* will not be performed until the fourteenth and fifteenth. In the meantime, on the weekend of the seventh, eighth and ninth, there will be other things to do. Friday and Saturday night concerts will include Bach's *Cantata 56*, the "Kreuzstab" Cantata, a solo cantata for Max, and *Cantata 208*, "The Hunt". Once the other soloists arrive, that will need a lot of rehearsal. The "family party" component of Castle Hill is increasing. Aside from small Alison, her eight-year old sister Carensa and teenage brother (who seems to spend a lot of time guarding Alison from poison ivy, woodchuck holes and stray automobiles), John Gibbons has brought his teenagers and now soprano Jane Bryden arrives with her five-year old daughter. Mezzo Jantina Noorman, who will sing the coming weekend and then remain to teach the Renaissance master-classes next week, flies in from England. She is greeted with pleasure by all the friends she has not seen since last year's Festival. Jantina is of Dutch origin, but moved to England after the Second World War. She is married to the headmaster of a prep school and teaches music there. She is well-known for her recordings of Renaissance music on which she uses a very sharply pitched nasal voice, a most unusual sound. But she will sing *The Hunt* in her own lovely mezzosoprano. Tenor Frank Hoffmeister completes the quartet of soloists. He too is a regular at Castle Hill.

When rehearsals for the *Kreuzstab* begin, the first problem is placing seven string instruments, four winds and a positive on the stage, without removing the harpsichord which will be needed later. When this has been settled, the orchestra and Max work together for over an hour. Max teaches as he works. "This is too slow. This aria always tends to get too slow, to drag. It should be faster and much more transparent." Max conducts as he sings it. Then comes the inevitable question to the musicians sitting out front: "How's the balance?" Not good. The horseshoe with strings on one side, winds on the other and the organ and

violone behind is rearranged. Now the winds are in the middle and the balance is better. In between bits of aria and recitative, everyone scratches. The mosquitoes, the plague of Castle Hill, are out in force tonight.

Around half past nine the musicians start working on *The Hunt*. “What’s it about?” someone asks. “It’s the one about Pan.”

“Which one is that?” “The one with the little hooves and the horns. Also, he’s very proud.”

This cantata, like Pan, has two horns, which is fairly unusual. The hunting horn is very difficult to play, especially if one prefers to remain on pitch. There are several kinds of Baroque horns. The ones with only one length of coiled tubing were used in the hunting field. They often had a removable bell so they could be stowed away in the huntsman’s hat. These horns may have been used in orchestras too, but that is uncertain. The other kind has several coils (crooks) which can be used to change the key. They were certainly meant for orchestral use and are played here by James Kellock and John Covert.

After an hour’s rehearsal the musicians call it a day. Max gets his lampless bicycle and pedals away down the pitchdark driveway.

The week is spent in rehearsal, sunbathing and shopping expeditions to Ipswich. Max’s new hosts have a salt marsh in their back yard, so he can swim there in the brackish but warm water rather than in the freezing ocean, when he feels so inclined. He also has to decide if he will get a haircut before going to Paris. Does he need one? If so, what kind will Ipswich provide? He decides to hang around outside the local barbershop one morning, to see what the men coming out look like.

Apparently not very good. He never gets his hair cut, anyway. Everywhere you go there are people rehearsing. Steven Hammer’s oboe has become a feature of the soundscape. He is determined that his duet with Max in the *Kreuzstab* should be

perfect. “Endlich, endlich wird mein Joch...” The Brown Cottage is fairly crowded now. Some of the musicians are living there, others at a seminary a few miles beyond Ipswich. There is a workshop of the Viola da Gamba Society of America in Boston this week, so many of the string players shuttle back and forth. The “Filles de Ste. Colombe”, Sarah Cunningham, Wendy Gillespie and Mary Springfels are involved in both activities; Sarah is playing in the orchestra for *Kreuzstab* and *Hunt* and has a concert with the “Filles” on Monday. The other two are involved in Sunday’s afternoon concert, “Voices and Viols”, for which rehearsals have also begun. That was supposed to be Jantina’s concert, vocally, but she has roped in several other people, including Max. He is going to be in a quartet which will sing Josquin des Prez songs he has never sung before. For several of them Jantina insists on the sharp nasal voice quality she herself always uses for music of this period (late fifteenth, early sixteenth century). The countertenor Steve Bryant, who will be studying with Max next week, and the choirmaster/cellist David Lockington think this is rather fun and rend the air with their shrill *El Grillo* (The Cricket) interpretation, but Max does not like it at all. He will not go so far as actually to state this, but he forgets to use the special tone so often that Jantina gives up. (“Can you try? Like a little child.” Max: “The thing is, little children are not basses.”). He will do it her way when he has to, she decides, at the concert. And she is right. In the meantime, Max has to learn five madrigals. He does not mind doing “Gottes Zeit”(Bach *Cantata 106*) in this program; at least he was told about that in Oberlin several weeks ago. But the des Prez is a bit much. He never even saw the score until a few days before the concert. The Monster Polyphemus is not getting enough of his attention.

At the next *Hunt* rehearsal Jane’s small daughter climbs up the steps to the stage and falls over a chair and down the steps. Jane, in the middle of an aria, rushes to pick her up, sending a reproachful glance at the girl who was supposed to be looking

after her. “Ah, poor babes.” The child is luckily more frightened than hurt, but it takes several minutes to calm her down. Then Jane resumes. She is followed by Frank (Endymion) who is nervous. He chews gum whenever he is not actually singing and his aria is punctuated by loud exclamations. Frank is a perfectionist and he is not satisfied. He too is feeling the pressure of time. Max sings his aria with the horns, which goes well and is followed by Jantina. Her aria, with two recorders, is the famous “Sheep may safely graze”. It is one of Bach’s most beautiful arias and the two oboists, Steve Hammer and Ken Roth, put down their instruments and pick up their recorders instead. They have been practicing together and will continue to do so until just before the concert. This is a second instrument for both of them and they are so fond of the aria they will work like fiends not to mar it.

Jantina’s voice comes floating down from the stage with all the purity and simplicity of the music. Jane, with the now silent child on her lap, gazes with growing wonder at her colleague. There is absolute silence; people working or studying elsewhere in the Barn stop what they are doing. As the aria draws to a close, the tears are running down Jane’s face. Instrumentalists nod and murmur their appreciation.

The comings and goings at Castle Hill increase, as people not officially expected until next week, but arriving early for the weekend’s music, move in. The children’s early music and dance week goes on throughout the bustle and groups of eight to thirteen-year-olds with recorders can be seen moving around the grounds. Musicians staying at the Brown Cottage are moving to Lasalette Seminary as the vocal students for next week arrive. They have priority at the cottage as they will have to be on the grounds for classes all day. Lasalette can only be reached by car, so various schedules are set up among those who own or have rented one. Lasalette is a Roman Catholic seminary and has a shrine which is visited by hundreds of people on Sundays. Nobody seems to know much about it and the people who are

staying there insist that it is inhabited by ghosts. The double rooms with bath have no locks, but nothing is ever touched. Once a week people are asked to leave their linen outside the door and clean linen replaces it. Aside from a large St. Bernard, no one has ever seen a non-musician near the place. It is all very mysterious, but who has time for unravelings.

By Friday evening all is in readiness for the first performance. However, the day started long before then, at quarter past nine to be precise, with a rehearsal of Sunday's madrigals. "Let's start by doing something with a normal sound." Max suggests gently. Jantina looks questioning. "Well," says Max, "would you warm up with this?" "I never warm up," states Jantina, "but if I did, I wouldn't mind a bit." But Max does.

At ten to ten the madrigal rehearsal ends. The *Kreuzstab*, called for half past ten, starts at five to eleven. When they get to the second aria, Max's duet with the oboe, Steve Hammer wants to stand, as Max is already doing. Max objects slightly "on behalf of those members of the audience who can't see me through you." A power mower makes further speech impossible. When it has moved off, they continue. While Max is singing, a string player behind him knocks into a music stand which whacks him across the buttocks. Max turns around, his eyebrows climbing up his forehead. The music starts again. One of the organ keys sticks and the sound continues till somebody pulls the plug on it. It is getting hot in the Barn.

There is a fifteen minute break at half past eleven. As only meals are provided and there is nothing to eat or drink available to non-residents in between, everybody has a drink of water. Residents have a refrigerator at the cottage which they can use to put cold drinks in, but most people forget and, anyway, who wants to trek all the way up there? There is a water-cooler in the dressingroom-cum-rehearsal-room next door.

Quarter to twelve: *Hunt Cantata*. The leader to the oboes: "When I give you an A, you look at me as if to say 'we don't need that'" Steve: "It doesn't do any good."

Twelve twenty-five: *Gottes Zeit*, for Sunday. A short rehearsal till five to one. Then lunch. Everyone has the afternoon off – beach and/or bed.

After dinner the tension increases. People get themselves into concert clothes and Castle Hill's white pleated dress shirts are much in evidence. The concert will open with Bach's *Concerto in E* for harpsichord and piano, played by John Gibbons. He was worried about the difficult beginning of the last part, but it sounds beautiful. Then comes the *Kreuzstab*. A recording enthusiast called "Doc" (his initials are P.H.D.) has hung a microphone above the stage. Max walks carefully because the stage is hollow. Every footstep, every tap, will be recorded. The orchestra plays even better than at the rehearsal and the duet with Steve is marvelous. The audience goes outside for intermission, filled with enthusiasm.

After the break Tom announces the *Hunt* Cantata and adds that he regrets sincerely that the hunting horn players have inadvertently been omitted from the program. "We welcome them," says Tom, and the audience claps. Then the cantata begins and all is fairly silent. Only one member of the audience kicks over a can. The spotlights have once again replaced the working lights over the stage and Max closes his eyes against them. It is very hot. He is wearing all black tonight, the same shirt he wore for the canary's funeral in Oberlin. Only now it is unbuttoned and the collar is folded down. It looks very different, which makes it a useful garment indeed. Jantina sings her aria and Max's follows. As usual, he puts in more ornaments during a performance than during rehearsals – at least any rehearsal the other musicians have heard. The final chorus, which sounded messy in rehearsal in spite of Tom's efforts to "put holes in it", that is, separate the words, still sounds messy. It simply has too many words in it. Each line also ends on an *-en* verbal ending, which makes it almost impossible to sing. It does not go too badly though, and the audience is not concerned. They have obviously enjoyed themselves and after generous applause hoist

themselves off the folding chairs and back into their cars and buses. Tomorrow the performance will be repeated.

The next day Max receives a letter from Derek Ragin. He is going to be at the University of Maryland next year, where they need a countertenor. He will spend a lot of time studying languages in preparation for his stay in Europe, about which he is very excited.

*El Grillo*: how can you describe it? As though the singer were being squeezed, the throat closed, the air being forcefully pushed out. The usual reaction: “they must be kidding.” There seems to be a worldwide argument going on about the correct vocal production for the Medieval period. Many ensembles do not agree that this is it and whatever evidence there is, is never a recording.

At noon, *Gottes Zeit*. This cantata contains a very beautiful duet for bass and alto, in which the bass (the Deity) promises “Today you will join me in Paradise.” The alto for this performance is Steve Bryant. Many people at Castle Hill have been speculating about the effect of a male alto on the Sunday afternoon audience, but in fact there will be no reaction. *El Grillo*, though, will provoke amusement and enthusiasm. The final chorale has to be done several times, as the timing is not good. (Max makes a rude noise, *sotto voce*). At one p.m. the cantata rehearsal is over and the singers involved go back to their madrigals.

After lunch, beach and a rest again, in preparation for the night’s concert. This time the beautiful duet for oboe and bass, the second aria in the *Kreuzstab*, is spoiled. A child, left to its own devices by thoughtless parents, has been wandering around and crashes to the floor with a chair he has collided with. Apart from this, nothing goes wrong.

On Sunday Jantina and Max’s students arrive and so does Dene Barnett. He and Max are going to have daily sessions to get the Baroque gestures for the staging of *Acis and Galatea* right. They have worked together before, so Max has the rudiments. Now to

apply them to Polyphemus. They go to the tavern, next door to the Brown Cottage, to practice.

Dene has been looking at the text of the opera. Polyphemus is a cyclops who is in love with Galatea, but she prefers the shepherd Acis. When Polyphemus finds this out he gets very angry and kills Acis. Galatea then turns her dead lover into an immortal fountain. One would think that any girl with such powers would have managed to keep her young man alive, but this is one of Ovid's *Metamorphoses* (with slight alterations) and verisimilitude is far to seek.

The problem will be how to turn Max into a Monster. Judy Olney, who is already hard at work on the costumes, is finding Max's difficult "because he has such a nice body." "Well," replies Max cheerfully, "the ugly parts of me will just have to be accentuated..." Not to mention his stature. Polyphemus is supposed to be a giant. The gestures for him are as elegant as for Acis, Galatea and the shepherd Damon, however, which is a Baroque theater convention. It is only by his strides that one can "tell" he is a giant. Polyphemus does not come on until the second act. Then he has a recitative, an aria, another recitative and a second aria in succession and has to be got off stage in some fashion after committing homicide. In Baroque opera people stood still while singing difficult arias – unlike the present time, when singers are sometimes expected by stage directors to sing in the oddest positions; lying down, for instance.

After about an hour they stop, as Max is expected at the barn for the dress rehearsal. At the Brown Cottage, meanwhile, students keep arriving. They are registered, shown their rooms and given a "special information" sheet stating, among other things, that "the plumbing systems in both the Brown Cottage and the Great House are archaic. Please treat the plumbing with kindness... The buildings on the estate were built for a family of four, not for fifty resident musicians." The students are also asked not to sing in the cottage after ten p.m. Meal tickets are handed out,

along with a map of the area. There are only eighteen students here this week. That means that classes can be arranged so that each person can work not only with the voice teacher of his or her first choice, but also with the other teacher and with Dene. By five there is a full house. There are about ten rows of chairs outside the Barn and the doors have been opened. The young volunteers who help around the grounds and with the seating on concert days, are resplendent in their white shirts and pants. There are several small children, including one about ten months old. The weather has been changing and it is now extremely humid, which is not too good for the viols, one of which develops a distressing squeak in its upper strings. One of the ways to combat this is by soaping the bow, but not in the middle of a concert. The Josquin songs, before intermission, are all played by a small consort, consisting of Les Filles de Ste. Colombe (Sarah, Wendy and Mary) augmented by Jane Starkman. The name of the group has led to some strange billing, compared to which Max's regular transition into VON Egmond or Egmont is insignificant. The group was named after the two daughters of Ste. Colombe, who played the viol. Sarah joined them later. They have been billed, in their time, as FILS, and even fillets, of Ste. Colombe, and on one memorable occasion in Montreal as "The Ste. Colombe Girls" on the English side of the program.

The audience is pleased with the Josquin and during intermission, which is followed by Jantina's Consort Songs, the squeaky viol is called to order. Another instrument almost drops out, though. Sarah Cunningham trips on the steps to the stage and only her immediate reaction in holding her viol away from her body saves it from being crushed under her as she falls. Such a reaction is against every basic instinct to save oneself with one's hands when falling forward. Sarah goes down flat but luckily does not hurt herself. Most of the audience has not even noticed, but her colleagues look upset. No one could tell from the lovely sounds issuing from their instruments, however, as the

first Consort song, “This Merry Pleasant Spring” is played. Then comes *Gottes Zeit*. All three male soloists are wearing Castle Hill shirts, but Max has left his open and rolled up the sleeves. Young Steve Bryant is visibly nervous. “Bestelle dein Haus!” (Set thy house in order) Max comes in with the obligato recorder and sings his solo, with its fast second part, very firmly. “Denn du wirst sterben und nicht lebendig bleiben.” (For thou shalt perish, nor mayst thou remain alive). “Lebendig” (alive) is the keyword. Then Frank and Steve join in. “Es ist der alte Bund; Mensch du musst sterben.” (That is the ancient covenant; man, you must die.) “Ja, ja, ja komm Herr Jesu, komm,” sings Jane, and the music dies away. The hesitant transition to the second part of the cantata was meant by Bach to illustrate musically the change in thought from the Old Testament concept of mortality to the New Testament belief in salvation, but the faltering ending of the f minor fugato is a trap for the unwary; a lot of people start to applaud, breaking the mood. Then follows the alto solo: “In deine Hände befehl ich meinen Geist” (into Thy hands do I commit my soul) Steve’s voice wavers, his nervousness is more apparent than ever, but the text absorbs it, makes it poignant, as Max’s deep voice breaks in with the promise: “Heute, heute wirst du mit mir im Paradies sein.” (Today thou shalt be with Me in Paradise.) “Im Paradies” – the youthful alto is stronger as he joins in. Their duet is followed by the finale chorale.

Preparations for *Acis and Galatea* are speeding up, meanwhile. In the evenings David Lockington rehearses the (local) chorus in the tavern. Judy and her assistants are hard at work sewing and fitting costumes and, after some research in the Performing Arts Library, Frans has made drawings for the set. The area around the Casino that can be used as a stage consists of the terrace overlooking it from above (the end of the Great House lawn) with its staircase at either end. In effect this is an upper stage area. People can come down the crumbling, and

therefore dangerous, staircase to the front stage, a stone floor which has been augmented in front by planks painted to look like stone. The rear stage consists of the three arches and the area behind them, which is fairly small.

An eighteenth-century pastoral does not call for much action. People move quietly from one Baroque position to another; the angle of the head, stance and gestures are the important things. *Acis and Galatea* has several extremely dramatic moments, however, all in the second act. In the first act, girl meets boy in pleasant Arcadian surroundings. Shepherds and shepherdesses, nymphs and swains, all “harmless, merry, free and gay” are enjoying themselves. Then Galatea wanders onto the scene, looking for her beloved Acis, followed by Acis seeking Galatea. But Acis (or rather the audience, for none of the singers address one another) is warned not to pursue her “to his ruin” by his friend Damon. Needless to say, he ignores the good advice and the first act ends as the lovers sing the duet “Happy We”, which the chorus adopts as the finale.

Act Two starts with the chorus foretelling the action: “Wretched lovers, fate has past (=passed) this decree; no joy shall last.” The sad, pensive mood changes and a quicker tempo anticipates the ominous “Behold, the monster Polypheme”, which is repeated more and more loudly. Suddenly Polyphemus appears, “the mountain nods, the forest shakes, see what ample strides he takes.” He walks to stage center and takes over the action. His first recitative tells us how angry he is that he has fallen in love, but the mood changes swiftly to one of tenderness. He is going to tell us all about Galatea’s charms and his feelings. His aria “O Ruddier than the Cherry” follows. Musically, it is a parody of Handel’s own “Why Do the Nations” from *Messiah*, and the idiotic text by John Gay contains tongue twisters like “Nymph more bright than moonshine night, like kidlings, blithe and merry” sung several times at breakneck speed. Immediately following this Polyphemus “sees” Galatea (who, like everybody else, has been standing there all the time) and calls her “to

Empire and to love”, to his palace in the rock and all the other good things he has to offer. She, however, replies “I loathe the host, I loathe the feast” and “Polyphemus, Great as Jove”, understandably nettled, renounces her in his final aria “Cease to beauty to be suing, ever whining love disdain.” Then Damon tells him in effect to take it easy, “Beauty by constraint possessing, you enjoy but half the blessing.” Acis then wakes up to what is going on. “His hideous love provokes my rage; weak as I am, I must engage” goes the recitative, followed by the marvelous aria “Love Sounds the Alarm”, in which Acis whips himself up to action. Damon counsels him to calm down. “Consider, fond shepherd, how fleeting’s the pleasure”, followed by Galatea, who asks him to trust her constancy. Then follows the duet “The Flocks shall leave the Mountains... ere I forsake my Love” for Acis and Galatea. It becomes a trio when Polyphemus adds his voice in “Torture, Fury, Rage, Despair.” He cannot, cannot bear and eventually hurls a rock at Acis. (“Fly swift, thou massy ruin, fly. Die, presumptuous Acis, DIE”). The sorrow of Galatea and the chorus changes to determination to make the best of it. “Cease, Galatea, cease to mourn” followed by her decision to turn Acis into a fountain. (“ ’t Is done, thus I exert my pow’r divine; be thou immortal, tho’ thou art not mine!”). Galatea is then consoled by Damon and the chorus: “Galatea dry thy tears, Acis now a god appears” and, after all, she still has her sheep... “through the plains still joy to rove, murm’ring still thy gentle love.”

Clearly, the action must be concentrated on the murder scene and the metamorphosis. Frans plans to build a fountain in front of the middle arch. He wants it backed by a scrim, which will be painted to look like plaster and initially lit from the front. If this is done right, the audience should think there are only two arches flanking the fountain. After Acis has been killed, he will be surrounded by members of the chorus, smuggled out through one of the side arches and will step onto a pedestal behind the fountain. The fountain will begin to play as Galatea decides to

turn Acis into a god, and spotlights behind the scrim will suddenly illuminate him on his pedestal.

The plan has won the approval of Tom Kelly, the stage director Paddy Swanson and stage manager Jeff Norberry. Frans has drawn the designs, measured, listed and bought the necessary materials on several forays with Jeff, and the two of them have been busy for days, hammering and sawing away at the Casino. They are aided occasionally by one of the young men who are constantly doing odd jobs around the estate and who are known as “the Goons”.

Max has daily rehearsals with Dene Barnett and the musicians, who were away during the early part of the week, begin to return. The soloists are learning their parts, their gestures, and begin walking through the action. The dramatic entrance of Polyphemus in the second act will take place from above. As the chorus sings “Behold the Monster Polypheme”, Max, luridly illuminated by red spotlights, will appear on the terrace overlooking the Casino. He will have to charge down the pitch black, decaying stairway as the orchestra plays the introduction to his recitative and reach the stage on “I Rage!” It is just possible.

The “fountain”, a white hardboard semi-circle with an edge broad enough for sitting on, is beginning to look like something. The hardboard has been painted with rough-textured paint and looks like stone; the edge is supposed to look like marble and a visiting sculptor, Carol Bolsey, gets to work on it with paint and a feather – after a while it does indeed look like marble. The hardboard hides Alison’s inflatable paddling pool from the audience. In it there is an automatic fountain, borrowed from a firm in Danvers. There are floodlights to pinpoint the bubbling fountain. All this electrical equipment, including the other stage lighting, house lights and so on, are manipulated from a place behind the audience, which has the disadvantage that you can not really see what you are doing at all times. A walkie-talkie should be of some help during the actual performance, though.

Another problem is the fountain itself. It is automatic and there is no way of controlling its highs and lows. During rehearsals the only trouble is that it invariably starts with one very powerful jet into the sky – soon known as The Pisser.

After a certain amount of discussion, it has been decided that Max can not possibly hurl the rock at Acis, to kill him. Adhering strictly to the text, Max's exhortation to the stone, "fly, thou massy (= massive) ruin, fly" would have to lead to his throwing the thing and being sure to hit Acis. Max's aim is not perfect, concentration on homicide in the middle of an aria is not a good idea and, besides, anything light enough not to hurt Frank could easily be blown off course by a breeze. What to do? They toy with the idea of a chute along the balustrade, down which Max rolls some round object, onto Frank positioned below. But Max is already downstairs. How and when does he get back up?

Frans has a better idea. The main gates to the estate are topped by huge stone globes. Why not make an exactly similar pair for the twin staircases flanking the Casino? Then Max can tear one of them from its moorings, stalk over to Frank and clonk him with it, all among the shepherds. They gather around, concealing Frank's departure and Bob's your uncle. General approval.

However, the stone globes turn out to provide the most difficult job of all. First Frans has to get a ball of the right size. His quest for such an object takes him all the way to Gloucester, twelve miles away, where he finally obtains a beachball, orange and white in segments, depicting Popeye and friends at play. His idea is to inflate the ball, build up a papier-mâché one around it, deflate the thing, take it out and use it for the other globe. The papier-mâché is to be painted in the same color as the stone balustrades. But it is terribly humid. After forty-eight hours (Frans luckily hates doing things at the last minute) the papier-mâché is still soggy. Frans builds another globe out of plaster of paris. Before it is dry enough to paint, it crumbles. It is just too wet up here. So back he goes to Gloucester for another beachball. Now he pastes strips of newspaper directly onto both



*"I rage...*

*I melt...*

*Whither fairest art thou running?"*

of Popeye's balls, using quick-drying glue. Some sand is poured into each, so they do not bounce away. They are painted, mounted on pedestals consisting of paper-covered tin cans sawn in half, and set in place. Perfect. They look as though they had been there as long as the stairs. Max practices wrenching one from its position as though it weighed a ton.

By the evening of the dress rehearsal, most of the costumes are ready. Judy, who will be sewing finishing touches until performance time, is pinning and marking, hoisting shepherdesses into eighteenth-century pastoral garb. Max is to have a pair of boots, brown leather pants and a khaki shirt with a stiff black pseudo-bearskin tunic over it, the broad shoulders of which are designed to make him look big, and a matching Cossack-like bearskin hat big enough to add stature. The heels of the boots are high as well. The whole thing looks quite Russian, which Dene says is right for the period: the Russians were considered dangerous foreigners in England at that time. Max's leather pants are not real leather; that would be too expensive. The material is cloth with some synthetic glued to it. Where it has been slightly pleated for the waistband, the synthetic is already coming off and a horrid black sticky substance adheres to whatever touches it. Max is warned to be careful. Luckily it only has to last for two performances.

The first act having been walked through, Max is then “on” for the second. He rushes down the steps in the high-heeled boots and arrives on stage a little late. “Can you go any faster?” Several people protest and it is decided that the first “I Rage” can perfectly well be sung from the landing. Needless to say, Max himself was not among the objectors. “I Rage!” He is carrying a large stick (“my trusty Pine”), replacing the broom he used during some of the rehearsals with Dene. Elbows out, stick on high.

“I Rage... I Melt” (both hands to his heart)... “I Burn!” Wham! Down comes the trusty pine, out goes the right arm, emphatic. “Thou trusty Pine! Prop of my godlike steps, I lay thee by!” (He hurls it away and addresses the chorus, huddled at the back of the stage in fear). “Bring me a hundred reeds of decent growth, To make a pipe for my capacious mouth.” He mimes playing a flute, so the audience will not think he wants to smoke and Paddy hands out “reeds” to the chorus – huge corn stalks, actually. The chorus receives them and bursts into a joyous rendition of “Oh, What a Beautiful Morning”, accompanied by several instrumentalists. After a time they go back to Handel. “In soft enchanting accents let me breathe Sweet Galatea’s beauty and my love.” The final lines of the recitative are sung softly. Max, balancing carefully, his weight on one leg (Baroque stage movements – only a peasant stands on both legs), the delicate hand and finger movements showing the connection between himself and the shepherdess. He points at Galatea with his right hand; she is good. But he points downwards from above – he is more important than she; after all Polyphemus is a demi-god. She stands stage left of him and can use her left hand to reject him. Left hand; he is bad. Rejection – palm out, fingers up. Like Max, she never puts all the fingers together. There must be space visible between the middle and ring fingers in the Baroque convention.



*Tom Kelly (standing in for Acis), Max van Egmond and Paddy Swanson.*

The soprano Karen Smith, who has only just arrived, is coached in a few gestures by Dene. She is wearing jeans and sneakers, but changes to high heels just before going on stage. They give her the necessary eighteenth-century feeling, she says. Karen learns fast, as do Frank and tenor Steve Oosting who is singing Damon, but of course in the very limited time available they will not be able to do as much as Max who had already learned the basic elements and has been practicing with Dene all week. Tom asks Max to change the pronunciation of Galatea. The name can be pronounced either with an *ay* or *ee* sound and the chorus had learned *Galateea*, while Max had been singing *Galataya*. Both pronunciations are considered valid but, as there are less Maxes than chorus members, he is going to have to change. That is going to be pretty difficult just two days before the performance, but Max will try.

Dene then decides that the principals will wear white gloves to emphasise the gestures. He takes a pair out of his pocket and hands them to Max, who puts them on, looking slightly

unhappy. He sings the recitative again, obviously hampered by the gloves which do not fit well and have the effect of blurring his carefully learned, beautifully executed finger movements. The orchestra members, who have not seen any rehearsals, are trying to play and watch at the same time. This being impossible, they decide to watch the afternoon's walk-through. There is a lot of discussion on the effects of Ipswich's climate on the instruments. Several people have brought second-best string instruments. Those who were not here the time a gamba cracked are told all about it. The rehearsal continues, with members of the chorus occasionally backing into Jeff, Frans or Russ, who are painting a pebbly surface onto the hardboard fountain and rushing around with lights and wire. Then Max sings his first aria, followed by the recitative to tempt Galatea: "Thee, Polyphemus, great as Jove, Calls to Empire and to love; to his palace in the rock, To his dairy, to his flock, To the grape of purple hue, To the plum of glossy blue, Wildings that expectant stand, Proud to be gather'd by thy hand." During this recitative Max must come from stage left to center stage. Each of the places and things enumerated goes with a hand gesture. The hands may never be on the same level; he needs to watch his finger movements and the position of his head. His steps must be taken at the right time and be precisely big enough to bring him to stage center. After having decided on his gestures, he went over them with Dene but the distance in the tavern was much smaller than here so he now has to lengthen his strides, but not so much that they will look awkward. Crossing left leg over right, standing still for the next gesture, but never on both legs at once, right hand out to denote palace, flock, left hand for the wildings (a strong gesture of picking fruit), he finishes up with the right hand stretched toward Galatea in an inviting attitude. It goes well. Karen's rejection is good too. They stand there, frozen into their positions, as Dene walks around them looking thoughtful. All right.

The rehearsal continues, with some problems arising as to how the chorus should mill around to cover Frank's exit. Max has bashed him with a beach ball, which at this stage still looks like a beach ball. The chorus and orchestra are amused.

At the end of the rehearsal I ask Max about the gloves. He hates them. Will he say so to Dene? No way. Max is working up to a performance and any emotional exertion must be avoided. But what about the emotional strain of knowing you have to wear the damned things, knowing they hamper you? Max believes himself capable of blocking it out entirely. I'm not sure. And if he can, does this not tie up with his fear of not getting emotion across the footlights? Perhaps he can only block out one emotion at the cost of all... A carefully noncommittal question to Dene: "What did you think of the gloves?" resolves this particular problem. Dene thinks they were awful. They do not fit and he is not going to use them. Max, when informed, is relieved.

The next day Max has a visitor, Lynn Edwards of Buchanan Artists Ltd. (His association with the agency has been terminated since). Max's manager Ariëtte Drost is based in Amsterdam and in principle she handles all his Dutch and foreign business, but it is easier to have someone in the United States to see to the paperwork there. Sitting on the sunny terrace which overlooks the Atlantic, they discuss all kinds of plans for the future and various financial points. Max has trouble getting used to the difference between an agent in The Netherlands and one in the United States: a Dutch impresario works on a percentage basis and pays all expenses; in the U.S. the percentage is considerably higher and the artist pays expenses on top of it. Lynn Edwards says there is nothing to be done about it but offers a (seemingly simple) solution: ask for a higher fee. Then what is left will still be worth Max's while. Another difficulty is the necessity of applying for a performer's visa for every concert tour. Every European needs a visa for the United States and for the ordinary visitor a B visa will suffice.

However, when Max teaches at a college or conservatory, like Oberlin, he must also have a J visa, which has to be renewed annually. In addition, each concert tour requires an H visa, which is like a temporary work permit. It has to be applied for in the state in which the tour begins and of course each and every state has its own laws. Obtaining an H visa always causes some difficulties, as you have to prove that an American could not do the job in question equally well. One of the most important reasons for having an American agent is that, apparently, American agents have less trouble getting H visas for their clients than European ones. So there are two forms of protectionism involved. The union for the profession in question also has a say, as is the case in England. It seems understandable that a mineworkers' union, for instance, would want to protect its members against the admission of large numbers of foreign workers, but in the arts this kind of protectionism is not in the public's best interest: every artist is unique.

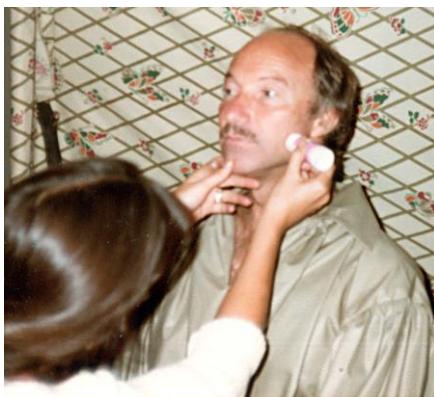
In any case, Lynn suggests leaving all these problems to a lawyer, which is her customary practice, but they decide that for the time being Lynn will look into it herself (Later on, this proves to lead to trouble: for the next concert tour Lynn is asked to produce document after document for the immigration office in Boston, proving that Max is so special that no American can sing just like him [??]). These delaying tactics, commencing in the fall, take so long that Max, who has to return to the U.S. on January 2<sup>nd</sup> and is singing in Israel between Christmas and New Year's Eve, anxiously starts phoning Lynn. She then succeeds in making Boston promise to telex Amsterdam, but on 20<sup>th</sup> December Amsterdam still knows nothing; Boston has sent the application to the Artists' Guild in New York, just to make sure. The Christmas mail glut delays things even more and by Christmas the American consulate in Amsterdam has still received no word. Max leaves for Jerusalem with the assurance that Boston will telex to Tel Aviv. In Jerusalem Max gets full support from the Dutch embassy, which phones the American embassy in

Israel daily to find out if there is any news. Eventually the Americans suggest telexing their Amsterdam consulate in case they have heard anything, and this proves to be the case. Now all can be resolved. Amsterdam telexes the U.S. embassy in Tel Aviv where they actually allow Max to come and collect his visa outside office hours. This only involves an hour's taxi ride there and another hour back in between rehearsals, costing thirty dollars. But he has got the visa. It is valid for two whole months. In the same week the American Secretary of State forcefully urges close cooperation between the United States and its European allies. His subject is Cruise missiles...)

By Friday the stage is ready, the costumes are just about finished and Max has gone incommunicado. He spends the morning working quietly by himself under a tree and after lunch he teaches the final masterclass. Then he disappears again, this time to the beach where he spends about an hour and a half in the hot sun, alternately lying flat on his stomach with the score in front of him, and flat on his back with his eyes closed and his lips moving... until he falls asleep. On awakening he has a ten-minute swim with the current and a walk back up the beach to get his things. After a shower and a change, Max buys a popsicle and gets his bike. He goes wobbling up the road with a very Dutch striped nylon shopping bag on one handle bar, his wet blue trunks on the other, steering with one hand and holding the popsicle in the other. He feels great.

By performance time the grounds are full, the parking lots crowded. In the pavilion the chorus and principals are being made up. For some reason the person supposed to do this quit yesterday and volunteers have been working feverishly ever since, making garlands for the chorus, experimenting with whatever stage make-up there is. Luckily one of the students is a bit of a make-up expert. She has a whole bag of the stuff with her and has been twining garlands all day, even during classes. She is doing a fine job, but draws the line at making up a

monster. This is left to Carol, the sculptor, who has done some experimenting at the dress rehearsal and now sits Max down and contemplates his face. Carol figures out how far the Cossack-like hat will come down over his forehead and gets to work. She uses a lot of white, the eyebrows accentuated upwards and meeting across the bridge of his nose. His thin mustache is lengthened downward, following the line from nostril to chin, just past the mouth; quite oriental. Now his high cheekbones are accentuated, and the prominent jawline. The finishing touch is the lipstick: Carol uses plenty and makes Max's lower lip much fuller. The result is sensual in the extreme.



Max has been sitting patiently throughout all these activities. He has let people tug at his clothes, walk around him making comments, has sat there with his eyes closed while Carol spent at least twenty minutes putting goo on his face and photo after photo was taken. Shy, reticent Max remains perfectly amiable

under all these ministrations. "Don't you hate all this?" someone asks. "Oh no," is the reply. "In fact..." he sounds surprised "I rather like it."

Outside, the house lights go down. The opening symphony is about to begin. Instrumentalists take their places, the chorus moves to the stage area, helpers whisper "good luck" and find their seats. The pavilion is almost empty. Judy sits crosslegged in the middle of the floor, finishing Max's tunic. Plenty of time; she has the whole first act. He wanders around, looks in the mirror practicing facial expressions with the make-up on. He picks up his stick and moves through the difficult second

recitative. From outside, the music sounds. Sheepbells tinkle. "O, the pleasure of the plains." Max gestures and suddenly sees that his sleeves are still pinned. The button holes are there, but the buttons prove to be in the breast pocket. He can not take the shirt off; that would smudge his make-up, so under the one light left on in the pavilion, Max sits on a stool, having his buttons sewn on. He sings scales under his breath, warming up. At the end of the first act, everybody rushes into the pavilion. The audience is pleased, the chorus is excited; so excited that David assembles them to sing some scales, restoring order. Just before the end of intermission Jeff, carrying a large flashlight, fetches Max. Out they go, through a window and into the bushes. There is a concealed path which will take them up to the terrace. Max will have to climb onto his platform in near darkness, but Jeff will be there to help. The places where he is supposed to stand and where he comes off are marked with big strips of white tape. Just before the performance the stairs were checked and large fragments of the beer bottle some person had thrown there removed. Second act, beginners. "Wretched lovers" prophesies the chorus, "quit your dream! Behold the monster Polypheme." "Behold, behold." The red lights above go on and the audience gasps. Seen from this angle, Max looks a truly fearsome sight. On cue he comes pelting down the stairs. "I Rage," and onto the stage. "I RAGE". He melts and burns, lets the audience in on his feelings for *Gala-teea*. He has remembered. Then comes his proposal to her. He times his strides across the stage perfectly, ending up with an arm flung out in invitation and a most confident, filthy leer on his face. "Of infant limbs to make my food, And swill full draughts of human blood! Go, monster! Bid some other guest; I loathe the host; I loathe the feast." Galatea, outraged, isn't having any. Polyphemus, nasty as he obviously is, is so hurt by Galatea's rejection that at least part of the audience is sorry for him. Then Acis and Galatea come to the foreground again, Polyphemus sulking in a corner. Acis wants to DO something about Polyphemus. "His hideous love



Ipswich MA, Castle Hill: *Acis & Galatea*

provokes my rage” is Frank’s line, only it comes out the other way around: “His hideous rage provokes my love,” he sings – and blinks as he hears himself. The only thing to do is ignore it, which Frank manages very well. The people involved in the production have held their breath for a moment, but only one boor in the audience laughs out loud. “Weak as I am, I must engage.” Galatea sings to Acis of her love, Damon counsels prudence and Polyphemus, working himself into a howling fury, tears Popeye’s beach ball loose from the balustrade to the accompaniment of gasps from the audience, and holds it high. Only his head and arms can be seen over the milling crowd as he brings it down hard.... then the crowd parts to show Acis, who sings his dying words: “Help, Galatea,” he cries. Damon and Galatea rush to his side and he dies in their arms. The audience is very quiet. Then, after the chorus has adjured, “Cease, Galatea, cease to mourn,” comes Karen’s lovely aria: “Heart, the seat of soft delight, Be thou now a fountain bright.” The automatic spray is ready to be switched on. “Rock, thy hollow

womb disclose: the bubbling fountain (push the switch!), lo! it flows.” The initial Pisser delights the audience. Karen stands in front of the fountain to finish her aria and thus, mercifully, cannot see what happens next. For with the perversity of things inanimate, the fountain follows the music. Every time Karen’s voice goes up, so does a jet of spray. Every time she goes down mournfully, it subsides into bubbly froth. Presumably most of the audience is captivated with the technical expertise of the stage manager. Some people will consider the fountain’s antics tasteless, but only a very few are aware that the whole thing is pure coincidence – and who would believe that, anyway? Max, leaning disdainfully against the wall, arms akimbo, ignores the proceedings, trying to resemble a killer. The chorus, clustered on the other side of the fountain, acts a little uneasy. Later it turns out that this is not caused by the fountain, but by a small red snake which has slithered into the well-lit pool for a swim. Then comes the final chorus. “Galatea, dry thy Tears.” Max is still standing there, looking defiant. “Acis now a God appears.” The light behind the scrim goes on and Frank stands there on his pedestal, visible to all and wearing a laurel wreath. The audience is pleased at this coup de theatre. Galatea and the chorus gaze at him through the fountain’s spray, the chorus finishes “murm’ring still thy gentle love,” the scene freezes. All the lights are turned off. There is silence for a moment, then a great burst of applause. *Acis and Galatea* is a success.

The second performance on the following evening is held inside, due to rain. The technical crew spends most of the afternoon shifting objects and plants into the barn. The plants will have to create the atmosphere; the plastic pool is camouflaged as well as possible, but most of the effects will just have to be abandoned. Too bad; days of work for just one performance. The movements of chorus and principals will have to be run through again, as the stage inside is much smaller. And there is no place for actors to go to, off stage. There is no room for Max to stand

watching disdainfully, either. At one point all three male principals crouch behind a pillar, most uncomfortably. The impromptu dressing-rooms in a boatyard behind the barn are open. Max cannot find a place to change in seclusion. He wanders around disconsolately, looks outside, but decides not to get soaked in the process and finally retires behind a wheelbarrow. What the hell. The one advantage of the indoor performance is that Doc can tape it; the tape made outside has an interesting cricket continuo not provided by the composer. Despite all the improvisation it is a good performance and afterwards there is a big farewell party, followed by packing, for tomorrow Max goes back to Europe.

As a result of the air traffic controllers strike, there is some uncertainty about flights. Max's original plan was to take the shuttle from Boston to New York, get a taxi from La Guardia to Kennedy and emplane there for Schiphol where he is to meet Jehan-François, who will exchange his large suitcase for a small one for Portugal. Not that he is going straight to Portugal, of course. The flight to Amsterdam from New York connects with a flight to Paris. Max is to sing the Monteverdi *Vespers* there, tomorrow, followed by a recital the next day. *Then* he can go to Portugal for the next masterclass. However, the air traffic controllers have rearranged his schedule.

Most of the newspapers maintain that business is going on as usual, as that is the information the airlines are giving them. They want people to come to the airports and once there will see to it that they get a flight sometime. They lose the least money that way. Of the American papers we see, only the New York Times gives information on the chaotic conditions which are front-page news all over Europe. Our sons have phoned from Amsterdam to tell us that KLM is not flying to the American East Coast at all, today; they consider the risk too great. Boston is not telling people that, either. In any case, Frans, Emmy and I are driving to New York and persuade Max to join us, rather than

take the Boston/New York shuttle. It is subject to long delays and the Eastern Seaboard is probably the most dangerous area in the world in which to fly today.

The whole world seems to have decided to take to the road and the trip takes over six hours. Nevertheless, Max arrives on time for his flight – which is then delayed for five hours. As it is obvious he is going to miss the Paris connection, he calls Ariëtte Drost in Amsterdam. Max's student David Barick, who has sung the Monteverdi before, is dispatched post haste to Paris – his first trip. David is delighted. He is not allowed to do the recital, though. Paris has decided to call in another “stand-by” just in case Max is delayed further. Ariëtte advises Max to forget about Paris altogether under the circumstances, so when he does arrive in Amsterdam, after eighteen hours of traveling and waiting rooms, he can actually go home and spend a whole twenty-four hours there.

On August 18<sup>th</sup> Max flies to Paris and from there to Oporto the next day. He takes a taxi to Vila Réal, near which the Casa de Matéus is situated. It looks just like the drawing of it on the bottles of rosé wine, which is produced in the “rosé factory” down the road from it. Paradoxically, that is one of the very few local businesses not to be found on the list of sponsors of the Matéus Cultural Foundation where the Baroque course takes place. From Max's diary:

19 August 1981: two and a half hours with a deranged driver who repeatedly attempted to commit suicide (and murder me as well). Arrived thoroughly shaken and shocked and received most affectionately. The entourage for this fourth and last summer course of 1981 is again totally different from all the former ones: lovely old small palace with Versailles-like gardens and small private swimming pool, reasonable bedrooms for the faculty, and a hot meal twice a day, with two or three courses and wine,



*Vila Réal, Casa de Matheus*

prepared lovingly by the palace personnel. Most friendly, unorganised, genial people, quick to laugh; typical of the south. You capitulate instantly and abandon all northern precision (well, not all, of course). Ten voice students, reasonably talented, lovely people. One American, one Italian, one French student and seven Portuguese. Webb Wiggins is the regular accompanist in class and coaches. Other faculty members: Marie Leonhardt (violin), Charles Medlam (gamba), Ketil Haugsand (harpsichord) and G. Leonhardt (harpsichord), Edward Tarr (trumpet), David Reichenberg (oboe, traverso, recorder).  
Facilities: limited for classes, rehearsals, studying: not enough harpsichords, not enough room. But all in this blindingly beautiful palace and this pleasant climate!

Schedule: nine o'clock breakfast, ten to one masterclass; lunch from one to two, ensemble coaching from four to seven. Dinner from seven to eight, followed by rehearsal. Max teaches in English, which most of the students understand quite well, and amplifies in French. He starts off with a mini-lecture, as in the United States, but this time all the students attend, not just the singers.

August 20: Meal times are very animated. They are in a room downstairs which contains five round tables at which people practically sit in each other's laps. Deafening chatter, laughter and shouting during the meal. Bottles of wine keep getting knocked over, chairs collapse or the coordinator gets up to make an announcement, which is greeted by screams and cheers or shouts of disapproval. Very southern European. The (old) palace kitchen adjoins the dining room. Wood fires, a pump and rustic peasant servants in the well-known black widows' garb. Breughel! The (young) Count and his wife and children participate in everything and (as they are sometimes late for meals) they often eat sitting in the window seat or on the stairs, with plates on their laps...

August 22, Saturday: Same pattern as yesterday. Attended lecture by Marie Leonhardt. She often quoted my earlier one and linked up to it beautifully.

August 23, Sunday: ...the evening concert went very well and (as always) Lambert's "Ombre de mon amant" impressed people most.

August 24: Same pattern as before. A faculty meeting during dinner, to decide on the programs for the student concert (tomorrow); the usual calculations and maneuvering.

August 25: Normal schedule during the day, student concert at night, first half before dinner, second half after. Nice alternation between instrumental and vocal music, with a lot of pieces for brass this time, as we have a teacher

(Edward Tarr) and therefore students. A festive note. Some performers have to start over, because they lose their way. There was less time for preparation and things were less well organized than is desirable. On the whole, though, very animated in affectionate and friendly atmosphere which is characteristic of this course.

August 27: Regular schedule and final concert. All the concerts here take place in the palace chapel. Heavenly acoustics and baroque setting. The concert (*Ich habe genug*) is divine. By now I know this cantata backwards and forwards, which is what I like best. Very affectionate and lengthy approbation. Calls of Bravo. Tears. Embraces. Southern affection.

Immediately after my Bach cantata we hear an *Ave Maria* from the organ loft (as if from heaven), sung by students. Great surprise, was not announced.

After the concert another surprise, organized by our host, Fernando, Count of Vila Réal; after the final applause, the sound of large and small drums coming from the palace courtyard in what was almost a jungle rhythm. At the same moment, through the open church doors, we saw two gigantic dolls (fifteen feet tall) dancing and turning with limply swinging arms (there was, of course, a person dancing under the doll's skirt, carrying the framework on his shoulders). I had never seen this before, except in the movie *Molière*. It is local folklore. The drummers and dancers were there at the invitation of the Count. Everyone crowded into a circle around the spectacle and gradually joined in the dancing (round dance). The atmosphere was touchingly affectionate and relaxed, carefree and uninhibited. After the final chord everyone was naturally invited to the kitchen for a glass of wine. But after the wine, the musicians and dancers picked up their drums and dolls again and started afresh. This time, they yielded their drums to the spectators, once in a while. A drum was

planted on my belly, which I plied with verve. The vibrations went through my whole body. I observed the other drummers, to see how they were doing it and the conductor smiled approvingly at me. Later I heard that everyone had greatly appreciated my participation in the round dance (hand in hand with the youthful Countess) and in the drum show. In general, I was assured repeatedly by the Count: “everybody is in love with you!” This always seems to happen during these courses. And – because I am unaware of conducting myself in a particularly lovable or popular way – I keep asking myself why I evoke this response and whether the other teachers are usually so unpleasant.

With the drum still reverberating in my ears, I go to my bedroom, which overlooks the palace courtyard from which the merrymakers are slowly departing, with much happy laughter. The brass continues to serenade the night occasionally from one of the balconies, but at length all is silent and I leave the window to go to sleep.

On August 29 Max flies back to Amsterdam via Paris. In 's-Hertogenbosch the twenty-eighth International Vocal Competition is about to begin.

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## After 1984

On March 27<sup>th</sup> 1984, the original Dutch version of the book about Max van Egmond, published by Thieme in Zutphen, was presented in the Burgerzaal of the Naarden town hall. Max sang, accompanied by Thom Bollen on the piano and Jacques Bogaart, lute.

However the publication, which spanned almost thirty years, by no means marked the end of van Egmond's career.

*Left to right: Thom Bollen, Max van Egmond, Jacques Bogaart*



In the period that followed, he continued recording the Harnoncourt/Leonhardt Bach cantata project, which was completed in 1989. At the time of the final recording session he was ill, which hadn't happened before in the twenty years of the project's duration. Gustav Leonhardt, who was conducting, asked Max's former prize student Harry van der Kamp to substitute for him, which can be heard on one of the last recordings of this now legendary Telefunken production.

Max then recorded German Baroque cantatas for a personal friend, Jérôme LeJeune, who ran the Belgian Ricercar Consort. (See the end of this chapter for a complete discography after 1984.) He decided he was old and wise enough to sing his first *Schöne Müllerin* and gave a rare performance in a fully staged opera, Hasse's *l'Eroe Cinese* in the Holland Festival (1985), conducted by Ton Koopman.

His horizons, already broad, widened to include numerous concert trips to Japan, where he both sang and conducted for the first time in April 1994: he sang the Bach Cantata 106 *Actus Tragicus* and conducted Telemann's *Du aber, Daniel*. He went to Macau, to Mexico and to Israel.

He sang in the *b minor Mass* with Catherine Bott in Arnhem on September 10<sup>th</sup> 1994, at the Commemoration of the Battle of Arnhem.

In 1995 van Egmond, now approaching sixty, decided officially to end his solo career. He didn't want to wait until his voice was audibly deteriorating. He had been traveling the world as a soloist for almost forty years happily and successfully, but not without accompanying stress.

Good Friday 1995 was the perfect moment for a farewell concert. The Dutch Bach society in Naarden asked him to sing the Christ part in the *St. Matthew Passion*, under the direction of Gustav Leonhardt, with whom he had worked all his

professional life. Van Egmond had first sung the same piece in the Bach society chorus forty-one years previously. The press didn't take very much notice, although they had been notified, but for him it clearly and emotionally marked the closing of the circle.

However, Max reflected, did this mean he felt too old to sing another note? Not at all. What he wanted was to pick and choose; to continue to make music for and with students and close friends, but out of the limelight. What he calls his 'post-professional' activities should be seen from that perspective. He couldn't imagine life without Bach, so he took a step unprecedented for a world-famous singer: on September 17<sup>th</sup> 1995, at the monthly Bach cantata service in Amsterdam's Westerkerk where Max had been a frequent soloist throughout his career, the conductor Jan Pasveer welcomed a new bass to the chorus. A few years later, he also began writing the program notes.

He continued to teach, which included his annual summer courses at Matéus in Portugal and BPI in Oberlin and continued to sing joyfully in the faculty concerts involved. He retained his position at the Conservatory of Amsterdam (called Sweelinck Conservatory until 1994) until his retirement in 1997.

Van Egmond has also participated increasingly in external examination committees at home and abroad and served on competition juries, such as the J.S. Bach competition in Leipzig. He went to Brussels for the Queen Elizabeth competition in 1996, covering the competition for the French-language (!) Belgian television station (Belgium is a dual-language state) during intermissions.

Max van Egmond has always enjoyed declamation and narrating in music programs and continues to do so: in 2001, for instance,



Vila Réal, Casa de Matéus, Monteverdi *l'Orfeo*.

he was asked to declaim appropriate connecting texts in a series of programs around the *Mystery* or *Rosary Sonatas* by Biber, in Amsterdam's Oude Kerk (the Old Church, built in the 13<sup>th</sup> century).

In 1997 he was asked to conduct a *St. John Passion* in the Netherlands, an assignment he took on only because he thought he knew it sufficiently well, having sung in the piece literally hundreds of times. This experiment was followed by a very busy summer which took him to Oberlin, Saratoga Springs, Portugal and Japan.

On March 1<sup>st</sup> 1999, Max returned to the Conservatory, as chair/coordinator for Early Music, a position he held until 2003. On December 11<sup>th</sup> of that year, to add to the nostalgia of the closing century, the Dutch radio news service, van Egmond's first employer when he was just past his teens, turned sixty-five. Max was invited to present the 6 o'clock evening news. He calls it an almost emotional déjà vu.

The new century started with a bang: the Belgian dance company Les Ballets C de la B asked him and a few other baroque musicians to participate in a world tour of their program

“Something to Bach”. Max felt that this was to be a kind of background music rather than limelight, going to both Hongkong and another new continent was tempting, as was singing Bach. He went; singing at the opera house in Wellington, New Zealand and at the Adelaide (Australia) Festival Centre.

In December, the Utrecht University choir and orchestra turned fifty-five and ex-member Max sang all six Bach Christmas cantatas under three different conductors: two ex-conductors of the ensemble and the present one. Around then he also started making cds for his friend Peter Watchorn’s new Musica Omnia label and finally got to record Bach’s *Christmas Oratorio*.

In 2001 he sang *Winterreise* and *Dichterliebe* during the Piano 300 manifestation at the Smithsonian Institute in Washington D.C. with fortepianist Kenneth Slowik of the Smithsonian, also artistic director of BPI in Oberlin, at the latter’s request. They subsequently recorded *Dichterliebe* for Musica Omnia and Max went on to record other Schubert and Schumann song cycles with Ken and with his other BPI colleague, fortepianist Penelope Crawford, some for the first time.

At the end of that year, he also initiated some cross-pollination: a communal project by the classical voice department and the early music department of the Amsterdam Conservatory. Max felt that they should work together occasionally and set up a madrigal project, which was greatly appreciated as very fruitful by the students.

That year he also went to Mexico with his old friend the harpsichord player Jacques Ogg, to teach masterclasses and perform in an exhibition concert.

In 2002, the attraction having faded, van Egmond concluded his twenty-year commitment to the summer course at Matéus in Portugal. In October he sang *Ich habe genug* and Bruhns in Buenos Aires. He had gone to Argentina, with another colleague



*BPI 2009: Ken Slowik, Webb Wiggins, Nancy Zylstra, Max van Egmond*

from way back when, the organist Jorge Lavista. Again, master classes were combined with a concert.

He does love to travel. In 2004 van Egmond found himself unable to say no to the conductor Carl Crozier. He flew to Honolulu to sing in Hawaii's first *St. John Passion*; far away from the world press and in what he calls a paradise on earth. In 2005, at age 69, he decided to follow in his father's and elder brother's footsteps by becoming a Freemason. His motivation was a search for new intellectual challenges as he grows older. Max continues to say yes to carefully categorized things he enjoys: teaching summer school at the Amsterdam Conservatory and what he calls a "posthumous appearance" singing Bach *Cantata 106* under the direction of Leonhardt for an audience of medical specialists and dignitaries at the annual Anatomical Lesson lecture, both in 2008. He justifies this to himself (nobody else needs convincing!) by pointing out that it was a private performance, even though it did take place in that Amsterdam temple of music the Concertgebouw.

He took a gruelling submersion course in Italian before teaching more master classes in Perugia in 2009. Although his knowledge of Italian was sufficient for performing, he thought that teaching

public workshops in Italy would demand a higher level of proficiency. In the event, however, almost all the students turned out to come from Asia, so English was at least as important. That year he finally made the painful decision to end his connection with Oberlin Conservatory's Baroque Performance Institute. After thirty-two consecutive summers, Oberlin had become part of him. Aside from the two-week annual course itself, many BPI students had come to Amsterdam to be taught by Max and early music instrumentalists and a number of ex-students and colleagues had long been as close as family. There was no reason for that to change, of course. However, van Egmond wanted to take it easier in the summer as well as the winter, so high-energy, almost round-the-clock BPI was getting a little too tiring.

The program for his final performance there included Handel's *Dettingen Te Deum*, with its two great bass arias. A big party was to follow and, unbeknownst to him, his colleagues had ordered a humongous cake.

Sadly, just a day before the concert, Max received a phone call from his sister, telling him that their brother Eddy, who had been ill for a long time, had died. Despite his grief, he resolved to stay for the concert and the party, leaving Oberlin the next morning to be home in time for the funeral. Needless to say, he sang beautifully; he is a professional.

Max's has strong family ties, especially with his younger sister Nel and a circle of close friends. He and Jehan-François Boucher, who has been part of his life for thirty-five years, decided to confirm their bond in September 2009; they were married in a simple ceremony at City Hall in Amsterdam.

After leaving BPI van Egmond never expected to be approached for another summer course, but Jeffrey Thomas, who runs the Early Music Academy of the American Bach Soloists in San



*BPI 2009: Max cutting the farewell cake, assisted by Florence Peacock and supervised by Alex Blachly.*

Francisco, did so. After some hesitation, he agreed, stipulating that he would teach parttime and only perform once at a faculty concert. His decision was based on the the fact that Bach was to be the central composer and on the prospect of a trip to California.

Van Egmond's interest in the new and different is inextinguishable. In 2010 the thirty-two-year-old dramatist Dries Verhoeven came looking for a number of older (ex)singers for an avant-garde piece called *Empty Hands*. Max had admired his work since seeing his scenography for the contemporary opera *After Life* by Michel van der Aa. So he assented at once, even though form and content of the piece didn't start coming together until rehearsals had begun. Performances began at the end of November.

Around Christmas, Max read from a Middle Dutch bible, during a concert of madrigals by Sweelinck and his contemporaries in Amsterdam's Oude Kerk.

As 2010 drew to a close, Max van Egmond continued to lecture and teach sporadically, to sing Bach in the Westerkerk choir and write the program notes, to visit and to receive his numerous

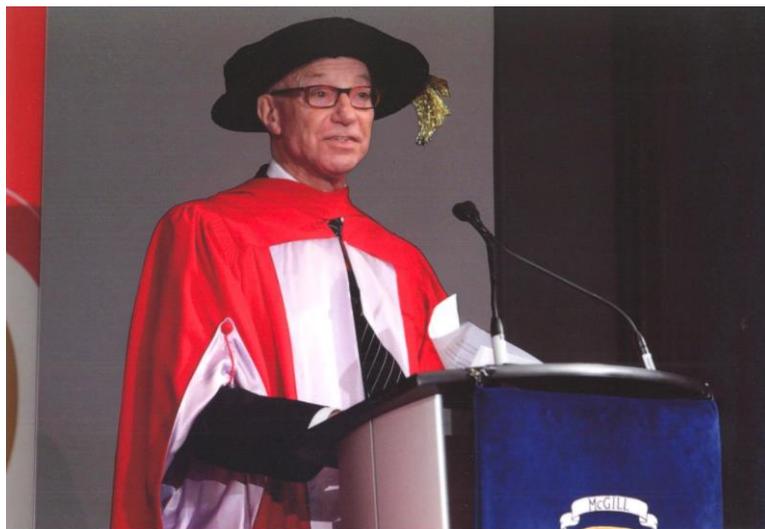
friends from around the world in the 17<sup>th</sup>-century house in Amsterdam, his “safe haven”, to which he is always so happy to return.

At 74, he was treated in a hospital for the first time in half a century. He suffered from a retinal detachment. Apart from that, he continues to stay fit by swimming daily and, he says, remaining optimistic.

Early in 2012, Max van Egmond received a letter from McGill University in Montréal, stating that the university intended to confer on him the title of Doctor of Music, *Honoris Causa* in the following June.

His first connection with the university occurred in July 1967, when van Egmond was the bass soloist in Beethoven's *Ninth Symphony* performed by a European youth orchestra and chorus formed on the occasion of the Montréal Expo and directed by

*McGill University, 8 June 2012*



Zubin Mehta. The young people travelled to Canada on the Dutch ship *Statendam*; Max's first ocean voyage since going to Holland as a child. During their stay in Montréal, they were housed in the McGill dormitories. In later years, Max sang and lectured at McGill numerous times, as commemorated by Professor Sean Ferguson, Dean of Schulich School of Music, in his introduction to Max's speech of acceptance.

<http://publications.mcgill.ca/reporter/2012/06/max-r-van-egmond/>

"It is especially appropriate that we recognize Mr. van Egmond during this, the Schulich Year of Early Music, since he is one of the fathers of the early music movement and has been an influential proponent of historically informed performance practice." he said.

Dr van Egmond had been accompanied to Canada by his sister Nel and Jehan-François. After the ceremonies and numerous parties and dinners followed by a short vacation, he had only a short time for celebration on his return home, as he was due to chair the jury for the Voice section of the International Bach Competition in Leipzig early in July. The prestigious competition for organ, chaired this year by Ton Koopman, voice and [baroque]cello, over which Professor Dr. Robert Levin presides, is a gruelling ten-day marathon during which the chairpersons of the juries hardly have time to breathe. Max's main "complaint" to friends was that all the vocal competitors were so good, it was hard to make a choice. He was aided in the difficult decisions by jury members Christopher Hogwood, Bernarda Fink and Klaus Mertens, among others. First prize went to the Hungarian tenor, Dávid Szigetvári.

Max van Egmond's contribution to vocal classical music, as witness the discography which follows, is a large and enduring one, for which innumerable people are more than grateful. As this book was going on-line, an email arrived at [info@maxvanegmond.com](mailto:info@maxvanegmond.com) containing the following lines:

*Dear Mr. van Egmond,  
I was just listening again to the wonderful recording of  
Christmas music you did with the Smithsonian group, and I  
wanted to let you know how much enjoyment your singing  
has brought over the past several decades. [...]  
I have always been impressed by the intelligence and  
warmth (and good humor when called for!) that your  
singing displays. Thank you for sharing your prodigious  
talents over so many years.*

Max van Egmond turned 80 on February 1<sup>st</sup> 2016. He and Jehan-François celebrated by going all the way to Puerto Rico for a vacation - and to avoid a big party. On his return, he told the Westerkerk choir that he was leaving and would become a “donateur” instead. Although retiring from the choir, he did sing the solo part of Christ in the St. John Passion on Good Friday of 2016 and may do so again in the future. He continues to write the program notes for the monthly cantata services, which can also be found on the Westerkerk’s (Dutch) website, <http://westerkerkkoor.nl/category/blog/blog-archieff/>.

Nicolaus Harnoncourt died on March 6<sup>th</sup> and Max van Egmond’s tribute to him appeared in Dutch, in the *Tijdschrift Oude Muziek* 2016/2. The English translation is to be found on his website, [www.maxvanegmond.com](http://www.maxvanegmond.com). On June 17<sup>th</sup>, his former student Peter Kooy was presented by the city of Leipzig with the Bach medal of honor. Max was asked to make the “Laudatio” speech, which can also be found on his website, in German, with a few remarks in English.

In late July he left for San Francisco, to teach at the August 2016 Summer Academy of the American Bach Soloists, as he had done for the previous few years. He updates his website regularly.

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## SOME REFLECTIONS ON SINGING

by Max van Egmond

It is self-evident that many of my ideas about singing have emerged in the course of this book, but it may be useful to summarize them systematically at the end. I am grateful to the author for allowing me the room to do so.

Which sources have contributed to forming my opinions? Which persons or circumstances have influenced me? For three decades, music has defined my life. During that time I have been privileged to work with a number of outstanding people who have had a lasting influence on me. In the field of baroque music for instance there have been Dr. Anthon van der Horst, Gustav Leonhardt, Frans Brüggen and Nikolaus Harnoncourt. I learned a great deal about romantic music from Pierre Bernac, Felix de Nobel and Eugen Jochum. Of course the strongest influence on my vocal training and choice of repertoire came from Mrs. Tine van Willigen, my teacher.

OBSERVATION played an extremely important part both in developing my technique and on my interpretation. Listening to the best recordings by the great singers, attending their concerts and also working with them has influenced me more than one might think. To name only a few: Gedda, Equiluz, Bernac, Ameling, Baker, Fischer-Dieskau and Souzay.

A professional musician of course consults countless books and articles. Most of them are on interpretation and a few on technique. Some of these sources are listed in the bibliography at the end of this chapter.

Finally, there is the enriching, instructive experience of working with many students at the Conservatory and in masterclasses and

with young colleagues. Laboring at the job together, looking for just the right way, contribute to increased insight and understanding. This holds true for both technique and interpretation. I would like to stress that I often only partially assimilate books, discussions and experience, during which process I consolidate these sources of inspiration as a matter of course and measure them against my own convictions and experiences. Of the many possible subjects for discussion in this short essay, I have chosen the following: talent, technique, theory, style, expression.

It is self-evident that in matters of vocal technique there are divergences and variations according to individual differences and needs. When discussing the singer and his voice in the following pages, I naturally mean his or her.

## Talent

The singer IS his own instrument. It is clear what this means in relation to the talent factor: to use a violinist's metaphor, one singer is born a Stradivarius and another a student violin. A good instrument does not cost the singer a penny, but a mediocre one can never be replaced (nor can a broken one).

This is of course a fundamental difference between singers and instrumentalists but in other respects they start equal: they must learn to PLAY their instrument. That too requires ability. Thus the singer needs two kinds of talent: first the good voice and then the capacity to learn to sing. I would call the latter vocal intuition. Clearly there are people with a beautiful voice but no vocal intuition and inversely those with great insight into singing but a mediocre voice. The above looks simple but in practice we find mainly gradations and combinations of the two. Thus a mediocre singer can sometimes be impressive because his volume is formidable and a singer less well-endowed in that area

may excite enthusiasm by the cultivated and refined way he uses his voice.

Finally, a forceful artistic personality is probably more important than many other factors. This holds true for all musicians. The course a career takes is also dependent on a great number of non-musical factors.

Can I sum up the concrete elements of talent? Only by generalization; sometimes more will be needed, sometimes an element lacking will not be fatal.

*The instrument:*

- a reasonably healthy, energetic body
- well-functioning lungs
- a stable-sounding voice
- a pleasant timbre
- a not too limited range (high and low)
- a not too limited volume
- a reasonable personal appearance

*“Playing” it:*

- basic musicality
- a feeling for intonation
- the capacity to (learn to) control all the muscles involved in producing sound (details under “technique”)
- coordination of what the singer HEARS (himself doing) and what he FEELS (himself doing)

*The artist:*

- sensibility, either through personal experience or the ability to identify
- a feeling for languages, poetry, rhetoric and drama
- communicative skill: the ability to transmit the above to the public and daring to bare one’s soul

*The mentality:*

- willingness to sacrifice much for one’s profession
- flexibility in respect to many situations and people

- notwithstanding the above, sufficient tenacity to stick to one's basic principles
- some contactual skills for taking artistic/commercial initiatives and for publicity

How can you decide whether or not a (future) voice student has enough talents? The voice can usually be judged quite easily but many of the other factors must be tested cautiously and some characteristics take years to develop, if they ever do. This makes estimating vocal talent an extremely precarious business.

Now let us look at what the voice student has to learn and the professional to preserve during his whole career as a performer.

## Technique

It goes without saying that what is described here can not replace singing lessons. It is too condensed and personal contact, including the possibility of demonstration, imitation, supervision and flexibility, is lacking. Also, every facet of voice training must be reinforced by numerous exercises which can not be given here and should be tailored to the individual student anyway. Nevertheless I will indicate a few possible exercises under the heading "warming up".

*Breath.* A singer who normally participates in sports and is thus used to having his lungs "pump" regularly has a head start on others. Good posture (free, relaxed, balanced) is essential. The respiratory muscles must be well-coordinated. For example: when the diaphragm is pushed downward, the abdominal wall should expand slightly. The stomach muscles must be relaxed enough for this to happen, not strongly contracted. This coordination of passive and active groups of muscles is fundamental in singing. RELAXATION means: contracting only those muscles which are really functional at that moment.

Fortunately, practically all the schools of singing agree on the importance of abdominal breathing: expansion of the abdominal wall and ribs is preferred to raising the sternum (breast bone), facial muscles and shoulders. Complete control of the diaphragm is essential. After inhalation, the breath must be prevented from being pushed up and out at the commencement of tone production. Of course some of the newly-inhaled air is used for that first tone, but the singer should have the consciousness of air as being stored low rather than high in the chest during singing and of not needing the whole supply for the phrase concerned. In addition, while the air is streaming out (that is, during singing), he feels the abdominal wall flexibly moving in and out, depending on the energy demanded for accentuation, consonants, coloraturas, and so on. Attacking a high note can best be combined with a simultaneous slight downward movement of the diaphragm (which includes expanding the abdominal wall).

*“Placement”, resonance, coloring.* Like most instruments, the voice has a place where the sound ORIGINATES and a place where it DEVELOPS. One is impossible without the other. To refer to the violin again: contact between the string and the bow leads only to sound production, but the beauty and power of the sound develop inside the well-formed, wooden body.

In the same way, when the air stream has started the vocal cords vibrating, the resonance chambers must be used to achieve the maximum effect in coloration and carrying power of the resultant sound. The resonance chambers comprise most of the respiratory tract, both above and below the larynx. By listening to what he feels and feeling what he listens to, the singer can gradually become aware, with patience and care, of how he can beautify and enrich his sound by subtly “playing” his resonance chambers. In that way, the vulnerable vocal cords are spared. The most important things to watch in this context are: the posture, position and movements (in short, control) of the soft

palate, the lips, the tongue, the lower jaw, the larynx and the respiratory muscles (particularly the diaphragm). To simplify, the uvula should tend upwards (which can be felt if you sniff while yawning), while the jaw, tongue and larynx tend downwards. The lips should be pushed forward rather than back and the position of the shoulders, collarbone and diaphragm should be low rather than high. Of course all this must be done with the greatest possible variation, suppleness, adaptation and relaxation. The uvula primarily regulates the employment of the higher resonance chambers, which enrich the sound, making it shiny, brilliant and clear; (this will be called “head quality” to simplify things). In this manner, the singer can learn to recognise the overtones in his own voice. The lowered jaw, tongue and larynx – in combination with slightly pursed lips – deepen the sound by adding round, full, dark elements (called “chest quality” hereafter). All these sound-colorations together make up the voice of the trained singer and the true vocal artist can mix and vary these colors, just as the painter combines the tints on his palet.

*Articulation.* Of all musicians, only singers work with words. Sadly, only a few accept the consequence that correct and intelligible articulation deserve high priority when practicing, rehearsing and performing.

Voiced consonants must be filled with sound, with music. They can resonate and “zoom”. Voiceless consonants must be placed as far forward in the mouth as possible and sound powerful.

When consonants are correctly placed they do not hamper voice placement and sound production, but promote them.

Vowels need not be adapted and “colored” as much as they often are. Some people consider it impossible to sing closed vowels (like *oo* and *ee*) on high notes. It is, however, made much easier by utilizing the higher resonance chambers more fully. On the other hand, open vowels (like *aah* and *ai* as in *air*) should often be slightly mixed with a closed vowel in the interest of placement, color and the beauty of the sound. Clear, well-articulated

diction serves several purposes at once: it enhances the sound quality (placement is easier) and expression (the manner of pronunciation expresses a great deal), and increases contact with the audience (intelligibility, communication).

I consider the aspects discussed above – breath, placement and articulation – to be the three fundamentals of vocal technique. A few other elements follow. They will develop more quickly and easily as the singer gains command of the three fundamentals.

*Range.* It goes without saying that every singer wants as wide a range as possible (from high to low). Many daily vocal exercises are rightly aimed at increasing the reliability of the highest and lowest notes and extending the range. Conscious use of head and chest voice is of primary importance here. Going up the scale one should (generally speaking) not lose the chest quality entirely, nor allow the larynx to rise. At the same time, the head quality should be intensified.

In the same way, the head quality should be taken down to the lowest regions, which promotes brilliance, carrying power and relaxation. The mixture of head and chest quality must never be unalterable but always varied and adaptable. During loud, dramatic passages in the higher regions, more chest quality will be mixed in. When the music is softer and more lyrical, the dark coloring need not be so strong. Men may even mix in a certain amount of falsetto. If low passages have to sound threatening or satanic and full, a lot of tinkling head quality is needed. In that event, women mix in some chest voice. However, if the character of the music is intimate, mysterious or weak, the sound may be made woollier, even diffuse, by diminishing the head quality. Rising passages sound more natural and relaxed when each note is approached and attacked from the head voice. Then the tone may be mixed with chest quality and thus developed. This is perceived as if the note originates between the eyes and is pulled through the whole body from there. Of course this has to happen

so fast and automatically that the various stages of the sound development cannot be heard separately. In singing towards the lowest regions, the prime necessity is for relaxation of the vocal cords and the surrounding muscles. Resonance must be felt / heard both in the chest and the head.

It is good to exercise both ends of the range every day. One can try to “extend one’s boundaries” while doing so, but do not, of course, force things. In that way, a surplus of notes is acquired at both ends, which are not used in the repertoire, but only while practicing. Men may sing up into their falsetto range and women down into their chest voice.

Countertenors have easy access to their falsetto and it is a wide enough range for them to sing alto or mezzo (sometimes even soprano) repertoire. Like women, they can switch to chest voice in the lower regions (going back to their natural male voice). “Directing” these transitions to falsetto or chest register (both in men and in women), making them smooth and mixing in the areas of transition, is a matter of constant practice, but also of taste and musical circumstances.

Castrati no longer exist. They kept their boy’s voice all their lives, but combined it with the power and maturity of adulthood. Surveying all this, one becomes conscious that there are (or were) various possibilities for performing soprano and alto repertoire: soprano parts can be sung by a woman or a boy (formerly also a castrato). Alto repertoire is accessible to women, falsetto singers and boys (formerly also castrati). It goes without saying that the history of music should determine which choice to make.

Bach, Handel and their contemporaries usually only indicated four types of voice: bass, tenor, alto and soprano. It was not until the time of Mozart and Beethoven that the words “baritone” and “mezzo-soprano” gradually came into use in the scores. Still later – mainly in operatic circles – further differentiation took place: basso profundo, baritone Martin, lyric tenor, coloratura soprano and so on.

Although the baroque officially recognised only four kinds of voices, all the other kinds we have today did of course EXIST: various intermediate ones, very high and very low ones. Works were composed for them too, but without this appearing in the score. So nowadays it is logical for a baritone sometimes to sing a baroque bass part like the role of Christ in Bach's *St. Matthew Passion*. Monteverdi has some low tenor parts which may well be sung by a baritone. Bach's alto parts are often suitable for a mezzo, but Handel's are usually too low. Keep in mind that the pitch of the A has varied in the course of time; consequently indications as to types of voice need adapting.

The haute-contre – appearing in French baroque music – is not always identical with a countertenor. It is often a high tenor part and should not always be sung in a pure falsetto.

The classification of human voices is always a little forced and artificial. Unlike instruments, people do not come in various standard sizes and kinds. In essence, each voice is unique and differs from any other voice, both in range and timbre. In this connection, an ideal situation occurs when a composer writes something for a particular PERSON, whose voice he or she knows well. Several examples can be found in the history of music, among them Mozart, Schubert, Poulenc and Britten.

How and when does one determine what type of voice a beginning student has? It is sensible for both teacher and student to be patient and reserved on this point. Sometimes the type of voice is perfectly obvious from the beginning and no doubts are ever entertained. Often the right road is not found until the technical development is more advanced and a diverse repertoire has been cautiously tried out. Vocal range and timbre are not the only elements involved; flexibility and expansion also play a part. The character of the singer and his preferences have some effect on the classification of the voice and fashion, nationality and existing role patterns can fundamentally influence vocal development.

We repeatedly find singers more or less forcing themselves in the direction of repertoire belonging to a neighboring slightly higher or lower voice, if that type is better “market value”. Sometimes singers pay for this when they are older.

*Volume.* This is partly determined by one’s physique. The singer must also learn to make full use of his resonance chambers, enabling him to increase carrying power without forcing his voice. The upper resonance is of great importance here. Most people have to work long and diligently until they have consciously learned to produce and hear head quality in their own voice, until they get the feeling that little happens in the larynx but that all the chambers above and below it are filled with a “warm glow” of sound vibrations. These are immediately transmitted outside the body, to the space in which one is singing. This too can be an almost physical feeling; the walls vibrate in sympathy with the vibrations in your body. I attach great value to this perception. It is as if the sound-energy, originating in your larynx, moves from there as speedily as possible, first to head, chest and body and then to the space in which you are standing. This gives you a sense of liberation and the pressure on the vocal cords appears to be minimal. The art of singing piano and pianissimo – with correct placement – is just as important as producing great volume. These skills include “seamless” crescendi and decrescendi to connect loud and soft notes or passages. These alterations and transitions in volume must be made in a natural way, almost continuously: on a small scale (when notes or syllables have varying stress), on a large scale (when the difference in volume encompasses entire phrases or passages). Later in this chapter – under the heading “performance practice” – I will go more deeply into the use of variation of amplitude and emphasis.

*Legato.* There should be the same kind of variation between connected and unconnected tones as there is in volume, described above. Always singing legato is just as uninteresting as always singing very loudly. Legato is good in lyricism, tenderness, mournfulness, ecstasy, devoutness and so on. But for anger, forcefulness, comedy, emphasis and such, a form of *marcato* can be more effective. In the same way, a little *staccato* may be just the thing for dancing and airy music. *Secco*-recitatives are heard to best advantage when performed less legato and even with a touch of *PARLANDO*. The *più cantabile* (legato) in the aria that follows then works even better. When I lecture on varying volume and legato, I am sometimes asked if I do not agree with the view that voice placement can be endangered by such subtleties. Some people say: “*decrendi* or softer unstressed syllables make me lose my placement” or “if I sing less legato I can’t retain the quality in my voice.” To be honest, statements like those appear to be a confession of incompetence. They are perfectly understandable from beginners, but an all-round trained singer should be entirely capable of handling these problems.

*Vibrato.* Again, variation is the watchword. Nothing is less interesting than a marked vibrato with a constant speed (or wave length) and intensity, ignoring the difference between long and short tones, loud and soft ones; and between singing solo and with other voices or in a dialogue with an *obbligato* instrument. It is hardly ever necessary to sing without any vibrato at all; sometimes for effect, often to emphasise dissonants, perhaps in a few limited stylistic areas. A little vibrato works well on short notes, a little more decorates the longer ones. Softer passages sound best with little vibrato and *crescendi* or loud parts may have more (as is natural). A vibrato may never become so wide that recognition of the pitch is endangered. It is also undesirable for the vibrato to be completely “built-in” or for the singer to be totally unconscious

of it, so that he can neither vary nor eliminate it. Some people are of the opinion that vibrato is inherent in the human voice and that every person has an individual vibrato, about which nothing can be done. I believe that one can distinctly observe that vibrato is a matter of culture, nationality, style, taste and so on. When listening to different kinds of singing – by trained and untrained voices, in sophisticated western societies and more natural ones elsewhere – every conceivable variant of vibrato can be heard, often differing note by note as well. In order to control vibrato, I advise keeping the diaphragm low and relaxing the larynx.

*Agility* (coloraturas, trills, ornaments). It is interesting to see how divergent the demands on virtuoso, acrobatic vocal ability were in different style periods. During the periods of Monteverdi, Bach, Mozart and Rossini, these demands were high to exacting. Many composers in the high and late romantic period, on the other hand, wrote much less “acrobatic” compositions. Curiously enough, this phenomenon is peculiar to vocal music. I presume that the instrumental works of Paganini and Liszt are considered to be more virtuoso than sonatas by Handel or Haydn. Thus, almost every singer’s repertoire requires that he achieve and maintain the agility described below. Some people are lucky enough to have a naturally agile voice; others have to work hard for one. I have found that it is an exaggeration to state: whoever is born without a trill or coloratura will never acquire one. The agility meant here is concentrated in two places: the larynx for the trills and the respiratory muscles for the coloraturas. Stated simply, a trill consists of continuously intoning the same second interval back and forth rapidly. Training means starting slowly and acquiring speed in about ten seconds. Expressed schematically, you begin with eighth notes, go on to sixteenths, then thirty-seconds and eventually what you have is a super-vibrato, which is the trill. The last stage can take weeks to achieve – if you practice daily – but it is attainable.

Coloraturas are rapid little runs on one syllable. The ideal situation is for the respiratory muscles to give gentle impulses to the air supply, while the intonation muscles (larynx) change the pitch with each little gust of air. This miraculous coordination in the body will slightly accentuate each separate note without interrupting the sound stream. If the respiratory muscles are too passive for this procedure, singers sometimes manage by separating the notes, using an *h* sound (*ha-ha-ha* coloraturas). If this does not occur either, the notes will flow into one another (gliding). Another way of trying for a reasonably clear coloratura is by cutting off the air supply at the larynx between every two notes and separating them in that way. When this is done very quickly, it reminds one of a billy-goat bleating, the so-called “goat trill”. For very rapid coloraturas (as in Monteverdi or Rossini) this is sometimes the only solution, if the respiratory muscles can not handle the speed.

The TRILLO is not a trill, but a coloratura on one note, which is repeated slowly at first, then faster and faster. If it is done correctly, the sound stream should not be interrupted (so no staccatos). The technique is thus that of a coloratura and not of a trill. At the end of a trillo, when the notes come fastest, the “goat-effect” is used for separating them – the trillo is only to be used in early baroque music of Italian origin. Monteverdi often wrote the whole ornament out, but it may also be used as a free embellishment.

*Warming up* (daily exercises). Of course every singer gradually develops an individual system of his own, which depends on his experience and requirements. Personally, I find the following procedure the most effective:

1. Humming and zooming on *m*, *n*, *z*, *r* and *l*. I insert vowel-sounds between these consonants, for instance *neem-me-num-me-neem-me*. (The syllable in italics is stressed; the *e* in *me* is neutral). Or: *zoom-me-zom-me*

*zoom-me*. This is first done mezzo-piano in the middle range, then a little louder, higher and lower.

2. Scales and sequence patterns going up and down from the middle. By sequence patterns I mean, for example: *c-e-d-f-e-g-f* and so on, preferably in a dotted rhythm, stressing the italicized notes. The vowel sounds should be varied, even during one progression, alternating between open and close. The purpose must always be to hear and feel the optimal use of the resonance chambers in almost equal measure on each vowel sound and at every pitch. Try to attain the following feeling: the sound is like a pleasant substance, floating through the body and emanating from it to the outside world. This sound-substance seems to consist of a dark, warm element (chest quality) and a glittering and penetrating element (head quality). The latter is essential to any well-placed voice. An even head quality makes every aspect of singing less difficult and more effective: breath control, singing high and low, forte and piano and also the “singing vowel sounds”. This exercise also begins in the middle range, not too loud. Subsequently it should be done higher and lower, louder and softer.
3. Fragments of text, sung to scales or melodic patterns. I use miscellaneous scraps of text. You can start with *do-re-mi-fa-sol-la-ti-do*. Then, on the same scale, you can sing: *Quo-ni-am-tu-so-lus-sanc-tus*. In this way, you can take bits of text from arias and songs, in any of the languages you want to practice in, preferably using difficult vowels and consonants. See to it that the brilliance (head quality) remains optimal and do not lose it. Remember: the (voiced) consonants too must be filled with sound, even with music. Spend more time on the consonants during the exercise to achieve this; try to make them as long as the vowels without reducing the quality or the brilliance of the sound. That is the way to

produce singers who sing on consonants as well as on vowels.

4. By now the voice should be sufficiently warmed up to “stretch” it. For that purpose, we sing melodic motifs going as high and as low as we can. Men may sing in their falsetto, women in their chest voice. Thus a surplus is created which is not used in practice, but which makes the extremes that are, easier to reach. Again, this exercise should be done with variations as to vowel sounds, intensity and tempo.
5. We try to stretch the boundaries of volume too: how can we sing as strongly as possible without forcing and without pressure on the larynx? On the other hand, how do we sing a carrying pianissimo, retaining the quality and brilliance? For this, we sing runs and improvised melodies, alternately louder and softer, for instance like an echo, double echo or inverted echo (starting softly). *Messa di voce* (swell and decrease of intensity) belongs in this category. There too, the problem is preserving the quality and making even transitions. For correct placement of unstressed syllables, we sing a few fragments of text exaggerating the difference between stressed and unstressed syllables, but retaining the quality and placement.
6. Finally, a few exercises for agility: coloraturas increasing in tempo, with varying rhythmic patterns. Then a few series of trills. Again, vary the vowel sounds, pitch and intensity.

*Breath training.* As I mentioned before, people who exercise their bodies daily get the best breath training a singer could want. But often specific breathing exercises are necessary, especially to correct bad habits or weak respiratory muscles. Stand up straight and relaxed, with the palm of your right hand pressed loosely against your abdomen and the back of your left

hand against your back. In this way, you can feel just what happens when you breathe and sing.

1. Exhale, emptying the lungs, and then inhale in short, vigorous sobs, interrupting the sound stream repeatedly by closing your mouth. Every “sob” is effected by flattening the diaphragm downward, so that the wall of the abdomen moves forward. By frequently interrupting with your lips, you gradually train the muscle. In this exercise, the abdominal wall will move back in after every sob, as long as the lungs are still relatively empty. As they fill up, however, the abdomen will remain more inflated, as it were, and towards the end, when the lungs are entirely filled, the ribs will also be slightly elevated. Exhale the air on a long *fff*, first allowing the chest to cave in, and then letting the abdomen return to its flat starting position. So when inhaling, the torso fills up from bottom to top, and when exhaling, it empties from top to bottom.
2. This exercise is the opposite of the preceding one: inhale on one gulp. Then blow the air out through as small an aperture as possible between pursed lips. Emptying the lungs in this way, you exhale extremely short, strong puffs of air (as if blowing out, one by one, a lot of candles which are too far away). Now you feel the abdominal wall moving in with each gust of air, the opposite of what happens in the first exercise.
3. Sit on the edge of a high chair. Empty the lungs and keep them empty for five counts (with an open throat). Now breathe in for ten counts, slowly and gradually. Remain filled for five counts (again, without closing the glottis). Breathe out slowly and gradually for ten counts. Remain empty for five counts again and continue to do this exercise for several minutes. Concentrate strongly on doing it gradually and evenly. Remember to fill up

from bottom to top and empty out from top to bottom. This exercise can relax the mind and body and bring it under control; recommended just before a concert.

As I explained earlier, you must understand that breathing requires delicate coordination between various groups of muscles. The diaphragm can not sink effortlessly if the abdominal muscles are relaxed at the same time. On the other hand, those muscles can only be tensed (exercise two) if the diaphragm is relaxed and can thus rise. Exercise three is the best one for feeling the muscles tense and relax consciously, because one group is tensed for five counts and must then suddenly be relaxed at the beginning of the next phase.

The warming up and breathing exercises given above can, of course, be varied and enlarged on according to personal requirements. The total time per day will vary with the person and the situation. Forty to sixty minutes is usually sufficient. Personally, I feel best when I have had a warm drink after exercising and then remained silent for a while. If I have not sung at all for several days, it takes significantly longer before I am back in form. A comparison with professional athletes and ballet dancers is not out of place. It is also true that when I have a great many rehearsals for several days running, I need less breathing exercises.

It is very stimulating to design, refurbish and adapt exercises for yourself and your students creatively. In principle, an exercise is nothing but a concentration of certain kinds of possibilities. If there are problems in pronouncing a sound, you think of lots of words with that sound and set them to an improvised tune. If high and low are not being properly bridged and connected, you think of melodies spanning one and a half or two octaves. If a person can sing a well-placed forte but no piano, he should begin on a strong note and go on to decrescendi or echoes. If someone is singing an ugly *a* but a beautiful *o*, then he should

start on *o* and very gradually go to *a*, retaining the quality. Then sing words with *o* and *a*: roses in arms.

When I am not in the mood for “dry” warming-up exercises, I make use of a selection of arias and songs, each of which has a concentration of difficulties. Some demand infinite breath, others contain many coloraturas and trills, some are full of difficult words, and so on.

During the past few decades, vocal training has sometimes been based too exclusively on the requirements and traditions of late-romantic opera repertoire. In general, that boiled down to an unending battle for survival against the sound of the orchestra, which had become fuller. The result (in simplified terms): a lot of forte and vibrato, a great deal of legato and portamento, lots of chest quality and lack of color, a lack of articulation and intelligibility. Even if it were true that this was the only way to survive, it still was not necessary to sing music from other periods or of different genres in the same manner. Singing sometimes became impoverished and rigid, against which I am trying to make a stand here.

## Theory

Before or during his technical vocal training, the future singer must learn basic theory so that he can pursue his profession intelligently.

*Music.* It goes without saying that solfège and related subjects should be learned thoroughly. A sense of rhythm is particularly important; many singers are rather undisciplined in this area. Playing an instrument is recommended.

*Culture.* Knowledge of the history of music is essential and more general knowledge of the history of culture and society is equally necessary. Working on important compositions, one

should be able to go deeply into the origins of each individual piece where necessary.

*Languages.* Every singer should really study languages as a hobby, as well as poetry and declamation. Each language he sings in should be correctly pronounced. This ought not to be taken lightly: language learning, however good, not aimed at performance, is inadequate, as the art of singing has some pronunciation usages which (rightly) diverge from the spoken language; in singing, vowels are sometimes lengthened or consonants emphasized, which demands greater precision than spoken language.

Some recurring problems:

- In German, confusion about the kinds of *e* sound, as in *de* and in *Herr*, or mixing up the vowels in “*erwägen*” and “*bewegen*”;
- In French music, confusing the three kinds of *e* in “*légère*” for instance, or the typically French phenomenon of liaisons;
- In English texts, the refined perfection needed to add color to vowel sounds like the *i* in “*king*”, the *e* in “*the*”.

Then there are traps: when systems vary from language to language, may one connect in German in the same way one does in French? Or: are double consonants treated the same way in Italian as they are in French? Or: may one aspirate slightly after the plosives *t* and *p* in Italian for instance, as one does in English “*tea*” and German “*passen*”?

So much for pronunciation. Now, general knowledge of the language you are singing in. The ideal situation is, of course, to be able to speak and understand it. If that is not the case, you should have at least a fundamental knowledge of the structure of the languages involved, as well as a word-by-word translation of all repertoire.

*Poetry/ rhetoric.* It is important to study verse forms, understand the many kinds of rhetoric, practice elocution and read poetry from different periods and countries.

*Biology.* It is sometimes said that a singer must be his own physician. Well, people are (rightly) warned against self-help in this field. That does not alter the fact that a singer should have a profound understanding of the way his body functions and of its needs, combined with the ambition to make and to keep that body healthy, vigorous, tough and strong. In connection with the preceding, I want to point out that after one's youth, it is important to foster vitality. I must also emphasize that, in order for a person to function well, vocally and artistically, the mind should get at least as much attention as the body.

Aside from taking care of his general health, the singer should naturally have some specialized knowledge of his vocal organs and the way they work. Although a good deal of singing is intuitive, it is useful to be able to visualize what is occurring physically when the singer has to depend mainly on technique if indisposed, or when teaching others.

*Teaching.* Almost all professional musicians also teach, at least when they get older. Working with as complicated and multi-faceted a phenomenon as students and the gift of making one's artistic ideas accessible to others, are probably things about which one can learn only a limited amount from books. Talent, tact, experience and being sensitive to others' needs are probably more essential. In any case, sensitivity and theoretical knowledge must complement one another.

## Style

As in the preceding part, I must limit myself to fundamentals. In the first place, I recommend that those interested consult the bibliography at the end of this chapter. Quantz and Kuhn are

particularly important, to start with. I will be referring to the bibliography now and then by mentioning an author between brackets. It is always necessary to identify with the composer and his times, by means of the various sources. That means taking an interest in the history, mentality, architecture, graphic arts and fashions of the period. Rococo style is sung differently when the singer imagines himself peacocking in the frivolous clothing and over-decorated buildings of the time. Knowing how much value Hugo Wolf attached to the text when composing, the singer will be a little more declamatory than usual.

To make clear what I mean by interpretation, supported by IDENTIFICATION, I will approach performance practice from two sides: first the SINGER's customs, mentality, traditions in the various periods, and then the comprehension of the COMPOSITION, to be found in the work itself and its background.

*The singer.* There is a great deal to be said for the hypothesis that the art of singing originated in declamation: the spoken word was uttered with increasing verve and emotion and gradually speech became song (Bernhard). Logical conclusion: the earlier the composition, the more important the text, the diction and the declamation in performance. Speech was so important to music that even the instrumentalists tried to "articulate" (creating small separations between notes, which occur naturally in singing by means of e.g. the plosive consonants).

What does this mean in practice? In the first place, very clear articulation. Then, reproducing speech rhythms in singing: a very audible difference between stressed and unstressed syllables, not only through dynamic variation but also through difference in length: slightly lengthening or shortening a vowel sound, which happens all the time in speech. The result is that, for instance, five syllables, each on one eighth note, all vary a fraction in length but compensate for one another so that the total length does not change. This might be called "singing

declamation”. Examples of difference in the length of vowel sounds are: English “food” and “foot”; German “fahren” and “fassen”; French “ombre” and “bon”.

Dance rhythm is closely connected to speech rhythm, which applies to most baroque compositions (including sacred ones). More about this in “The composition”.

It now emerges as a matter of course that constant over-use of legato (the late romantic system) smothers every nuance in stress, shortening or lengthening, connecting or separating, articulation and so on.

In the renaissance, baroque and rococo, great virtuosity was expected of singers. You can read about people who worked diligently on rapid vocalises all their lives, who studied trills and ornamentation. There were also basses and tenors who did their exercises in an extremely high falsetto (Kuhn). You can find much more in the books about these things than about cultivating more and more volume. Conclusion: take more time for agility training and the technique of ornamentation. Do not concentrate so exclusively on enhanced volume that your voice becomes unwieldy and static. See to it that your volume is adapted to the space in which you are singing and to the accompaniment. Up to the middle of the nineteenth century, (accompanying) ensembles were smaller than they are now. The instruments were not as loud and composers orchestrated accompaniments for singers less heavily than in the late romantic period.

Conclusion: singing largely forte in music from before the late romantic period, is stylistically incorrect. But the ensemble should adapt as well as the singer.

As the pitch of A was a little lower than it is now until the nineteenth century, high passages sounded less strained.

The instruments not only produced less volume, their timbre was also lighter. So the singers had no need to darken their color artificially, as they did later. Thus, the use of the full chest voice in the higher tenor range was not customary before Rossini’s day. Conclusion: if the voice has a lighter sound in the high part of

the range than in the low part, it is unnecessary to make it much darker artificially in pre-romantic music. Baroque instruments were transparent and rich in overtones. When voices adapt to this, you get unity. By not deliberately making the voices much darker than they are, you avoid the danger of making them heavy (unwieldy) and unsuited to rapid passages and subtle nuances.

Singing louder often results in more vibrato. If as much sound as possible becomes your aim in life, the uncontrolled vibrato may become permanent. As most loud singing is unnecessary in pre-romantic music, one may suppose that there was less vibrato. But that is not the only reason. The structure of the compositions indicates the same thing. The many rapid ornaments may be compared to decorative pleats, artistically fashioned in smooth, beautiful material. If the basic material is crumpled, however, the lovely folds do not contrast as well with it. By analogy, if a voice vibrates at about the same intensity as the trills and coloraturas, the ornaments will drown in the constant vibrato. Another indication for limiting vibrato in pre-romantic music is the harmonic and contrapuntal structure. In Monteverdi's solos, duets and madrigals, a performance is hardly worth the effort unless the intonation is very clear and delicately attuned. If each singer were to give rein to his own individual, sometimes wide vibrato, the sound would be muddy. Incidental vibrato, which the singers coordinate, can however function as a nice ornament. Looking at Bach's counterpoint, one also sees the need for a transparent vocal pattern. If a theme keeps returning, if it is, for instance, (in an aria) first heard in the continuo, then in the oboe and finally in the singing, the voice should sound as clear and disciplined as the instruments. If the singer adds his own "wobble", the entire effect is lost. In short: listening to one another and mutually adapting vibrato, volume, timbre, phrasing and articulation is a basic necessity.

Clearly, ornamentation played an important part in pre-romantic music (Linde). It was divided into free and prescribed ornaments. If we look at the development during the renaissance, the early and high baroque and the rococo, we can see the prescribed ornaments becoming more and more detailed. At the same time, the possibilities and the necessity for adding one's own (free) ornaments declined. In the renaissance, the composition was only a skeleton, which needed extensive supplementation by the performers. In the baroque, the composition was worked out much more completely and ornaments were only supposed to be made in repeats (like *da capos*). The rococo gave us the ultimate in (prescribed) vocal acrobatics. *Da capos* went out of fashion and free ornamentation was limited to short cadenzas, for instance on a fermata.

Even in Schubert's time, strophic songs were sometimes varied slightly by the singer, but towards the end of the nineteenth century the soloist was no longer expected to take any initiatives.

For instructions on how to make ornaments, I refer you to the bibliography at the end of this chapter. I would like to conclude with the following on free ornamentation: during the high baroque, there was a big difference between the French and the Italian style. Ornamentation in the French style was modest, consisting mainly of trills, *appoggiaturas*, *schleifers* and mordents. The Italian style, however, was more energetic. The singer's own virtuoso improvisations (replacing a long note by others of a smaller time value) surrounded the composed notes. So one must consider where and when the piece was composed before adding ornaments. But there is more: free ornaments should enhance the character of the text, not detract from it. So cheerful ornaments do not belong in a sad aria.

The baroque and the rococo were characterized by flamboyance and vanity, not only in music. Ostentatious display was the watchword. But if the artist were a real genius, all the showing

off was in support of the expression and the results were not only amazing, but also moving.

During the romantic period, all the emphasis was on emotion, on deep feeling. People became averse to frills and frivolity. They wore their hearts on their sleeves and were ever ready to shed tears. Sometimes they exaggerated to the point of sentimentality, as baroque excesses had led to coquetry.

The romantic era brought new means of expression for singers: long rubati, languishing portamento, sometimes a free vibrato, even a sob or sigh. Nevertheless, the art of Lieder singing was the ultimate in chamber music. Intimacy must have been important and both delivery and intelligibility were essential.

Later in the romantic period, the accompanying instruments gradually gained in intensity and a darker sound. Orchestras grew. The opera became so preeminent that “singing” was usually equated with “singing opera”.

During the baroque, the audience was charmed by virtuosity and frills; early in the romantic period they expected (over)sensibility and wanted to shed tears; in late romantic times their preference was for the sensation of very high, very loud singing. Therefore late romantic vocal technique is largely dictated by the will to survive: the first requisite was a large volume, carried forward throughout the piece.

This led to over-legato and loss of dynamic variations (which go with the natural stress). The vowel sounds had to be glued together and the intervening consonants were pushed aside.

Forcing the chest voice upward led to distortion of pure vowel sounds and to straining. Add to this the factor of increased volume and it is clear that a wider and more constant vibrato was the result.

Phrasing and *messa di voce* (varying volume) was felt to be not worth the trouble, as any subtleties would be lost in the big sound of the accompaniment, anyway. I am not mentioning this to denigrate this technique. The aim was legitimate and made sense in the context of Wagner, Puccini and the other music

which led up to it. The trouble does not arise until you try to sing Lieder, oratorio and early music in the same way. Then you juxtapose elements as disparate as if you were playing tennis with a soccer ball or seasoning an egg with hot peppers. In conclusion, let us take a look at contemporary vocal music. We can see that some composers want to do away with subjective delivery. They only wish for text and notes from the singer, no emotion. We can also see some composers concerning themselves with the use of vibrato. The element of improvisation is experiencing a come-back, not having been used since the old days of free ornamentation. It is interesting to note that the endless possibilities inherent in the human voice are utilized and activated in an imaginative way by several contemporary composers.

Looking back over this short sketch of the development of vocal customs and requirements, we can formulate the following basic recommendations:

Technical discipline and an instrumental approach are needed in pre-romantic music. Ornaments and rapid passages must be realized with clarity and virtuosity. One must be capable of varying and limiting vibrato, legato and forte. Diction and “singing declamation” deserve a great deal of attention. Ultimately, all these nuances voice one’s emotions. That is baroque expression.

In romantic art songs, one should be as painstaking about diction as in early music. (Good singers always are, in any style). Fifty percent of one’s expression can come through the consonants (listen to someone recite). Pronunciation thus becomes a vehicle for comprehension and emotion, for contact between the soloist and his audience. The romantic singer must adjust mentally to maximum, extrovert expression of his emotions. Almost all musical effects may serve and there is no need to shun rubati.

In romantic opera repertoire, the main thing is searing passion. The maximum in volume will often be needed, but the real artist will always find a way to make gradations.

For contemporary music, a cerebral, intellectual attitude is sometimes necessary. One needs an all-round technique, which ought to be used sensibly and inventively.

So much for performance practice from the viewpoint of vocal tradition. Similar conclusions can be drawn by starting from the work, rather than the interpreter. To that end, we will now focus on the compositions, their authors, the people who wrote the texts and the cultural and historical context.

*The composition.* I want to give only a few examples of this kind of observation. I hope the reader will develop a taste for it and go exploring for himself.

If we compare the structure of a secco-recitative with that of an aria, we can see that the recitative tells the story, the “plot”; the aria is a meditation on that recitative. The recitative has a long text, none of which is repeated; the text of the aria is only a few lines, but that is sung over and over again. The recitative has almost no ornaments or coloraturas, it is less melodious; almost more declamatory than musical. The recitative-line is only loosely connected with the accompaniment: the continuo does not force the singer into a strict tempo or into increasing his volume. In the aria, however, the vocal line is like an obbligato instrument: a part of the whole interwoven with the others. Accordingly, in baroque opera staging, recitatives had action, but arias were sung standing still.

The conclusions are obvious: recitatives must be easy to understand. (The text is only given once but none of the plot may be lost!). The atmosphere and the tempo may change during a recitative; it does not have to be loud, but should be delivered in a lively, human and expressive manner. A recitative is not a vocal exhibition, but more like declamation. In the arias, one sings cantabile. The words may be subordinated slightly and become the bearers of melismata and coloraturas. The singer accommodates himself in a disciplined fashion to the tempo, the balance

and the coloration of the ensemble. In short: he sings instrumentally.

Baroque music is usually based on dance rhythms, sometimes fast, cheerful ones and sometimes slow and stately ones. In either case, the cadence is important, that is, the variation in the intensity of the notes, in the amount of legato and in lengthening and shortening notes. After a little practice, one can easily discover hemiolas: exciting interruptions of a triple rhythm that suddenly becomes duple (for only a few measures) without this being indicated in the notation. Singers can usually recognize them by the subordination of the text. The rhythmic surprise should be clearly indicated by a shift in stress. Another surprise in baroque music is the dissonant. It too should be located and made the most of, through emphasis and possibly by slight lengthening. Appoggiaturas are usually baroque dissonants and should therefore sound more strongly than the principal note and be slightly lengthened. It goes without saying that this effect only works if the appoggiatura is sung ON THE BEAT. It was a hard and fast rule during the high baroque that ornaments like appoggiaturas, slides, mordents and trills should not be executed before, but on the beat. They thus use part of the principal note's time value.

This subject also includes recitatives which end with appoggiaturas. This phenomenon is mainly confined to the last word at the end of a recitative or a section of one. Such an ending is often notated as two notes on the same pitch, preceded by one which is a third or a fourth higher. In accordance with performance practice, the next to the last note is usually changed. It is raised by a second, if the preceding note is a third higher, but raised by a fourth if the preceding note is a fourth higher (so the fourth is repeated). In musical terms: *e-c-c* becomes *e-d-c* and *f-c-c* becomes *f-f-c*. This rule may be ignored for effect in exceptional cases.

The problem of where the two final continuo chords should come at the end of a recitative or a section of one, if the first of

the two continuo notes is notated under the final note for the voice and forms a dissonance with it, belongs here too. According to the latest musicological findings, the notes are usually performed as notated in secular music (that is, dissonant) but in sacred music the continuo usually defers the two final notes until after the singer's voice has died away.

A comparable phenomenon can be found in Haydn, Schubert and their contemporaries (Friedländer). They often write two notes on the same pitch, the first of which is preceded by a small printed appoggiatura, a second higher. The appoggiatura may be notated as a fourth, an eighth or a sixteenth note, with or without a slash through it. Usual performance practice is that the appoggiatura takes up the whole time value of the principal note and thus replaces it. An example is to be found in the Schubert Lied "Wohin". In the line *Ich weiss nicht, wie mir wurde* there is an appoggiatura on the words *weiss* and *wurde*. Although it sometimes has a slash through it, it should not be sung as a short appoggiatura, but as the principal note. One thus sings *weiss* on an eighth *c* and *wurde* on an eighth *g* (edition for high voice). I repeat, all the cases of appoggiatura execution mentioned above apply whenever they stand for the first of two notes on the same pitch. More on this subject in Carl Philipp Emanuel Bach and Max Friedländer (see bibliography).

Slightly lengthened or shortened notes are immediately compensated for in baroque music by other notes, so that the tempo does not essentially change. In contrast, the romantic rubato always marks a temporary change. In romantic Lieder, I am an advocate of fairly frequent, discreet rubati, even where they are not notated. For example: the gradual build-up to the high point of a phrase can be reinforced by a hardly noticeable accelerando, which is rounded off by a return to the original tempo.

A few more examples regarding the composers themselves and their background:

If one compares Bach and Handel, one can see great contrasts. Bach lived and worked in a rather unassuming way, in a small

town, with limited means. He had few famous soloists from other countries and used boy soloists for soprano and alto solos and sometimes members of the choir or orchestra for the other ones. Handel, however, lived and worked in the glitter of the big city and a large court. He could afford expensive soloists; Italian castrati and other celebrities, accustomed to flaunting their virtuosity.

Much of Bach's music is of a sacred nature. There is more room for devoutness than for individual, solistic brilliance. Handel, in contrast, wrote many operas and secular cantatas: food for prima donnas. Handel's music leaves room for free ornamentation in da capos and other repeats. You also feel that the music requires it. His soloists could gratify their vanity. In Bach's work, free ornaments do not usually add anything new, because the music is so complicated and complete. The conclusion is obvious: use lots of bravura in Handel. Make lavish use of ornaments (maintaining the style and nature of the music). Be more restrained in Bach and allow the magisterial musical architecture to speak for itself. Limit free ornamentation to a trill or appoggiatura or two. You might be a little more daring in his few secular works. Some composers make it easy for us to discover what they mean. Christoph Bernhard wrote a clear treatise on the interpretative style of his times. Giulio Caccini prefaced his songbook *Le nuove musiche* with useful indications on means of expression. He tells us that in Italian vocal music of the early baroque, several kinds of *messa di voce* are important: sometimes a crescendo and sometimes a decrescendo, sometimes even both on the same note. Such swells can certainly express a great deal of feeling, when tastefully executed.

Later composers also left us many indications: we know that Verdi objected to the liberties taken by singers in his time. He wanted them to stick strictly to the score. We know that Fauré was unhappy with the excessive rubati used in his day. The interested reader will find it easy to discover many more such examples.

If we compare Schubert and Hugo Wolf, we can see that the latter was highly selective when it came to his Lieder texts. He set the texts very sensitively and wrote few strophic songs. He seldom used the same theme for two different texts. Schubert, however, used any romantic text as an opportunity for writing a delicious melody. His melodies reflect the general atmosphere of the poem, but do not follow the mood word by word as Wolf's do. Therefore, a reflective singer will tend slightly toward the declamatory in Wolf and give the melodic free rein in Schubert.

Now some examples of the observation of time and place:

If you know that the trillo is only used in early baroque music of Italian origin, you will not use it in Vivaldi (too late) or Purcell (not Italian). However, knowing that Schütz studied in Italy and that he incorporated the Italian style in his own compositions, you might use a trillo in his works occasionally.

The Italians have always been more extrovert and exuberant than the French. This should be made obvious in the interpretation. Sing Italian music flamboyantly and daringly. Be generous with free ornaments. By comparison, French music may sound more dignified and reserved. Free ornaments should (as stated earlier) be limited to short trills, appoggiaturas and such. But this only holds true for the high baroque. Earlier French baroque music – namely the airs de cour – was very extensively and skillfully ornamented. Thus the time and place always play a part and are often independent of one another.

If the French and Italian character are so important in determining performance practice, then what about music from England, Germany and other countries? It was often strongly under the influence of the French or Italian style and can be similarly treated. Purcell is more French, Handel more Italian. The German J.S Bach and the Netherlander Constantijn Huygens sometimes wrote in the Italian and then again in the French style. Still, any attentive musician can find native

characteristics in, for example, German, Dutch, Scandinavian or English music and base his interpretation on them.

It is interesting to compare the romantic art song of Germany and France. I often see the German Lieder as oil paintings and the French “melodies” as water colors. The former have thick emotional colors and the latter are more transparent, painted in pastels.

The musical indications (tempo markings, signs indicating dynamics, rubato, etc.) are a very special element in observing music. The older the composition, the scarcer the composer’s indications. (They are sometimes added by the editor or publisher, which is not authentic!). As late as Bach and Handel, tempo markings are still sometimes lacking. The dynamic signs are summary and schematic. They only indicate where a soloist is accompanied and where the ritornello (prelude, interlude and postlude) begins. The notation in baroque music may not always be taken literally. Largo can sometimes mean: serious. Vivace sometimes stands for: cheerful. The contrasts in tempi and dynamics are in fact smaller in baroque music than in the romantic period: a ritenuto is spun out longer in Brahms than it is in Haydn.

What publishers publish is, sad to say, not always what the composers have composed. When an edition looks ‘suspicious’, the conscientious musician must always verify that what is in his edition is the same as what is in the manuscript.

During the romantic period, composers gradually began to write out more directions for performance, but Schubert still only gave indications for piano and not in the vocal line. Hugo Wolf wrote out much more and Benjamin Britten adds unambiguous indications to almost every phrase or measure.

This was only a handful of examples, meant to stimulate research. Good (music) libraries are sure to have a large selection of volumes on composers, style, interpretation and so on. It is also instructive to discuss these subjects and to exchange views (compare notes) on them. Listening to various interpretations

(on recordings, for instance) can be most stimulating. I wish to emphasize that stylistic and performance practice traditions are not hard and fast rules. They are illustrative of the period and leave room for variations and exceptions.

## Expression

When you have digested all you need to know and gained the skills, if you are inspired by sincere emotions too, the results may still be disappointing if you are unable to project your intentions across the footlights. Special talent, growth, technique and practice are necessary in order to make your expression palpable to an audience.

Here too, the natural performer is the best off. These are the rare, gifted artists who have had “something to say” when performing, from the start. Still, a personality must develop. Shyness and reserve must be thrown off gradually. Eventually you have to dare to bare your soul. Growing up and gaining experience must enlarge the scope of the emotions, so that they are known not only in theory but in practice.

However, expression is also a skill which can be learned matter-of-factly. Actors and elocutionists can teach us how to increase the power of verbal and vocal expression.

We must also realize that expression should not be just clear, but extra distinct. The reason is that the listener is, in general, passive and must be activated into sympathy. He is usually not expressively programmed and emotionally “warmed up” the way the performer is. Also, we often sing in languages which are



Sprecher (Speaker) in *The Magic Flute*

not the audience's native tongue. A great artist can try to get past this difficulty by making the atmosphere palpable through "vocal magic".

In conclusion: all the recommendations and theories above can lead to no more than part of the eventual interpretation. There are also elements so individual and mysterious that they can not be described. That is a good thing, for one may lose one's ability to be ecstatic, enchanted and moved if these emotions are too deeply analysed. One of those indescribable things is the "personality" of the soloist. It is also a rare gift to be able to combine all the technical, theoretical and stylistic skills well. The real artist will not only demonstrate his ability in performance, but also share an individual and moving experience with his audience.

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Bach, J.S.	The Cantatas -Vol.I (1-4)	Leonhardt, Leonhardt consort	Telefunken	6.35027 pocket edition 6.48191	1971 1982
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Bach, J.S.	Cantatas BWV 56 ( <i>Kreuzstab Cantata</i> ) BWV 82 ( <i>Ich habe genug</i> )	Brüggen, barokensemble	Philips/Seon	6575.093	1978
Bach, J.S.	Cantata BWV 73	Leonhardt, Leonhardt consort	Telefunken	6.42664 cassette 4.42664	1977
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Bach, J.S.	from <i>Geistliche Gesänge</i> BWV 469 “Ich stehe an deiner Krippe hier” i.a.	Bons	Glorieklanken	EP 2019	1960
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Beethoven, L..van	Lieder op. 52, (Bonner Lieder)	Krumbach harpichord & fortepiano	Intercord/Bovema	MPS 168-004 (also MPS 13012 ST) (BASF CRO.841)	1973
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Blanckenburg, Q. van	<i>l'Apologie des femmes</i>	Koopman Residentie Orkest	Polygram	6814 781/786	1982
Blow, J.	Songs from <i>Amphion Anglicus</i>	Leonhardt	Philips Seon Philips	6833.107 6599.636	1973
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Bosmans, H. and Voormolen, A	Songs	Anthology of the Ned.Lied of the 20 <sup>th</sup> C.	CBS	LSP 14514	1981
Bruynèl, T.	Collage resonance II		Europesche Fono Club	EFC 2501	1967
Fux, J.J.	Austrian Court Music “Caro mio Ben” from: <i>Gli Ossequi della Notte</i>	Wenzinger, Meints, Slowik, Crawford, Graybeal, Baroque Performance Inst.	Gasparo	GS 206	1979

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Handel, G.F.	<i>Admeto, Re di Tessaglia</i> HWV 22 (Meraspe)	Curtis Milan Baroque Ensemble	EMI Virgin Classics	1c 163-30808/12Q 61369	1977 1998
Handel, G.F. (Telemann, Bach)	Arias	Leonhardt Concentus musicus	Telefunken	SLT 43101-B	1967
Hasse, N.	“Mijn ziel zal eeuwig zingen” “Ontferm U Heer”	v.d. Schoor	Glorieklanken	NP 3032	1962
Haydn, J (Quilter, Strauss)	Songrecital	Matse	Springsound	SPS 80-05/1000	1980
Huygens, C	<i>Pathodia Sacra et Profana</i>	Ameling / Satoh / ter Linden / Uittenbosch	EMI	5N: 165-25 634/35	1978
Krieger, A. (Purcell, Lully, Scarlatti)	Songs of the Baroque Era	Leonhardt Leonhardt Consort	Telefunken	6.41088 AS (SAWT 9525-B Ex)	1967
Lully, J.B.	<i>Alceste</i> (Alcide, Eole)	Malgoire, La Grande Ecurie et la chambre du Roy	CBS	CBS 79301 M3 34580	1975
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Monteverdi, C.	<i>Il Combattimento</i> and other madrigals	Leonhardt Leonhardt Consort	Telefunken	6.41132 AS	1971
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Purcell, H.	Purcell Recital	Koopman / ter Linden	Harlekijn reissued Philips	2925.503 6570 700 (0070)	1975 1981
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Purcell, H.	Harlekijn Barok (Sweeter than Roses, Alleluia)	Koopman / ter Linden	Harlekijn	2426.501	1976
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Rameau, J.P.	<i>Hippolyte et Aricie</i> (Pluton, Jupiter)	Malgoire, La grande écurie et la chambre du roi	CBS Masterworks	79314	1978
Rameau, J.P.	<i>Zaïs</i> (Oromasès)	Leonhardt, La petite bande Collegium Vocale Gent	Edition Stil	(4 lps) 10157	1979
Reger, M. (Einsiedler)	<i>Requiem</i> , etc.	Martini Junge Kantorei	Telefunken	SLT 43.114-B	1969
Röntgen	“Laat krijgen en schanden” “Gij zijt mijn rots”	v.d. Schoor	Glorieklanken	NP 3032	1962
Schubert, F. Ravel, M.	<i>Schwanengesang</i> <i>Don Quichotte à Dulcinée</i>	I. Gage	Telefunken	SAT 22.509	1968
Schubert, F.	Mass in A flat	van Lier	private recording	110942 L	1967
Schütz, H.	<i>Seven Last Words</i> SWV 478 <i>St. Luke Passion</i> SWV 480	Jürgens, Leonhardt consort, Monteverdi Choir, Hamburg	Telefunken	6.41193 AW	1964
Schütz, H.	<i>Symphoniae sacrae</i>	Groningse Bachvereniging	private recording	6810.167	1972
Telemann, G.P.	<i>Der Tag das Gerichts</i> (The Day of Judgement)	Harnoncourt Consensus Musicus	Telefunken	6.35044 EK (SAWT 9484/85-A)	1966
Telemann, G.P.	300 <sup>th</sup> Birthday Edition Excerpts from <i>The Day of Judgement</i>	Harnoncourt Consensus Musicus	Telefunken	6.35554-5-6	1981
Telemann, G.P.	“Du aber, Daniël, gehe hin”	Wenzinger Baroque Performance Institute	Gasparo	GS 228	1981
Vogelweide, W.v.d.	Minnesang und Spruchdichtung (Medieval ballads)	Binkley Studio der Frühen Musik, München	Telefunken	6.41208 AW (SAWT 9487-A)	1966
Weber, C.M. von	Kammermusik und Lieder		Edition M+P	6630-010	1977
	“Kom en laat ons Christus eren” i.a.	Bons	Glorieklanken	EP 2020	1960
	Psalm 101 V. 1-2,6,7 Psalm 122 V. 1-3 Psalm 47 V. 1,3-4 Psalm 85 V. 1,3	Bons	Glorieklanken	EP 2021	1960
	“Vliegt hemelwaarts als de vogel” “Zie op hem”	v.d.Schoor	Glorieklanken	NP 3031	1962
	“Spreek tot mijn hart” (compilation)	v.d.Schoor	Glorieklanken	RL 6304	1963

COMPOSER	TITLE	PERFORMERS	EDITION	NUMBER	YEAR
<b>WARNING: This update is not and cannot be complete. Recording companies merge, are sold, move single or multiple tracks to new compilations and bring out remastered recordings, all without reference or even notification to the musicians involved, let stand sending them recordings. Not only is this extremely ill-mannered, it also makes it almost impossible for the musicians to verify that they are receiving the royalty payments they are owed.</b>					
Adriaenssen, E.	Love Songs & Dances	Kirchhof Liuto Concertato	Sony Classical	SK 66 263	1995
Bach, C.Ph.E.	Die letzten Leiden des Erlösers	Kuijken La Petite Bande	Deutsche Harmonia Mundi	(2 cds) 77042	1986
Bach, J.S.	The Cantatas - Vol.XXXVIII (157-159)	Leonhardt	Telefunken	6.35657	1986
Bach, J.S.	The Cantatas - Vol.XXXIX (164-166)	Leonhardt	Telefunken	6.35658	1987
Bach, J.S.	The Cantatas - Vol.XL (172)	Leonhardt	Telefunken	8.35659	1987
Bach, J.S.	The Cantatas - Vol.XLI (175-176)	Leonhardt	Telefunken	8.35755	1988
Bach, J.S.	The Cantatas - Vol.XLII (180-181,184)	Leonhardt	Telefunken	8.35799	1988
Bach, J.S.	The Cantatas - Vol.XLIII (187)	Leonhardt	Telefunken	8.35836	1989
Between 1985 and 1989 Teldec re-released all 45 volumes on CD, retaining the original numbering, with the suffix ZL or ZK. Teldec 4509-91755-2 to 4509-91764-2, <i>Das Kantatenwerk, Sacred Cantatas</i> volumes 1-10 with 6 CDs in each volume, came out in 1994. It is still widely available, also as a boxed set.					
Bach, J.S.	<i>St. Matthew Passion</i>	Abbado RAI, Milano	Memories	hr-4137/8/9	(1969)
Bach, J.S.	<i>St. Matthew Passion</i>	Jochum Toonkunst Amsterdam	AVRO	cd	1970
Bach, J.S.	Cantatas BWV 56 ( <i>Kreuzstab Cantata</i> ) BWV 82 ( <i>Ich habe genug</i> )	Brüggen Barock-Ensemble	SEON	reissue as cd SBK-60373	1998
Bach, J.S.	Cantatas BWV 211 ( <i>Coffee Cantata</i> ) BWV 212, ( <i>Peasant Cantata</i> )	Harnoncourt Concentus musicus	Telefunken Teldec	reissue SAWT 9515-B and SAW 9583-M dig.remast. 0630-13400-2	1968 1996
Bach, J.S.	Missa (1733)	Harnoncourt Concentus musicus	Warner: 50 years Das Alte Werk	reissue on cd DAW 2564 69057 1	2007
Bach, J.S.	<i>St. John Passion</i> BWV 245	Harnoncourt, Gillesberger Concentus musicus	Warner: 50 years Das Alte Werk	reissue on 2 cds DAW 2564 69644 4	2007
Bach, J.S.	b-minor Mass	Harnoncourt Concentus musicus	Warner: 50 years Das Alte Werk	reissue on 2 cds DAW 2564 69853 8	2007
Bach, J.S.	Cantatas BWV 18, 59, 89, 90, 106, 118, 152, 161 & 182	Jürgens Monteverdi Choir Hamburg	Warner 50 years Das Alte Werk	reissue on 2 cds DAW 2564 69599 2	2007
Another boxed set, with the sixty cantatas in separate sleeves was re-issued by Warner Classics as DAW 2564 69943 7 in 2008.					

COMPOSER	TITLE	PERFORMERS	EDITION	NUMBER	YEAR
Bach, J.S.	Cantatas BWV 27, BWV 158, BWV 198, ( <i>Trauer-Ode</i> )	Schröder Concerto Amsterdam	Teldec	4509-93687-2	1994
Bach, J.S.	Cantata BWV 197 ( <i>Gott ist unsre Zuversicht</i> )	Harnoncourt Concentus musicus	Teldec	reissue on cd 0630-12321-2	1996
Bach, J.S.	b-minor Mass	Leonhardt La Petite Bande	Deutsche Harmonia Mundi	1C 15716 9541 3 reissue 2 cds 77040-2-RG	1984 1985
Bach, J.S.	<i>St. John Passion</i> BWV 245	Kuijken La Petite Bande	Deutsche Harmonia Mundi	reissue on 2 cds 77041-2-RG	1987
Bach, J.S.	<i>St. Matthew Passion</i>	Leonhardt La Petite Bande	Deutsche Harmonia Mundi	reissue on 3 cds 77848-2-RD	1989
Bach, J.S.	Cantatas BWV 82 ( <i>Ich habe genug</i> ) BWV 152, 202	Pierlot Ricercar consort	Ricercar	RIC-061041 re-release Aus der Tiefe, RIC 295	1989 2010
Bach, J.S.	<i>Christmas Oratorio</i> BWV 248	Watchorn Boston Bach ensemble	Musica Omnia	MO 0101	2001
Bach, J.S.	Missae Breves, BWV 233-236	Folan Publick Musick Orchestra and choir	Musica Omnia	MO 0203	2006
Bach, J.S.	Cantatas BWV 45, 62, 140, 192	Folan Publick Musick Orchestra and choir	Musica Omnia	MO 0204	2007
Bach, J.S.	Famous Cantatas (BWV 4, 12, 51, 54, 56, 67, 80, 82, 131, 140, 143, 147, 170)	Harnoncourt, Concentus musicus Leonhardt, Leonhardt consort	Teldec Warner classics	reissue 4cds 450992627-2 7 45099262 723	1993
Bach, J.S.	<i>Ratswahlkantaten</i> (BWV 29, 71, 119, 120, 137)	Harnoncourt, Concentus musicus	Warner	reissue on 2 cds in volume 2 of "Bach 2000"	2000
Bach, J.S.	Secular cantatas BWV 173a, 201	Leonhardt, Orchestra and Choir of the Age of Enlightenment	Philips	446 716-2	1995
Bach, J.S.	Cantatas BWV 27, 34, 41, 56, 82, 206, 207a	Bernius, Leonhardt, Brüggén. Tölzer Knabenchor, Kammerchor Stuttgart, Concerto Köln, Haarlem Baroque Orchestra	Sony Vivarte	compilation on 4 cds digitally remastered Sony 1472165	2012
Bach, J.S. i.a.	"Noël en Musique", compilation of vocal and instrumental music	Boston Bach ensemble, Smithsonian Chamber players i.a.	Readers Digest Selection	PRI 703	1990 2000
Bach, Handel, i.a.	<i>Amore traditore</i> (BWV 203) <i>Dalla guerra amorosa</i>	Mencoboni, harpsichord	Nuova Era	7099	1991
Bach J.S, Haydn, Schubert, Gounod i.a.	<i>Max van Egmond</i> in the series Les Plus Grandes Voix du Monde		Readers Digest Selection	3545.16/1-3 F 96026 FF 3/1-3	2001

COMPOSER	TITLE	PERFORMERS	EDITION	NUMBER	YEAR
Bach, Schütz, i.a.	Deutsche Barock Kantaten X	Fernandez Ricerca consort	Ricerca	RIC-206092	1997
Bach, family	Motets & Cantatas	Ricerca consort Collegium Vocale Ghent i.a.	Ricerca	RIC 210 re-release	2002 2007
Bataille, G. (arr.) i.a.	Airs de Cour	Kirchhof, renaissance lute	Sony Vivarte	SK 48 250 B0000027X3	1991 1993
Bataille, G. (arr.) Moulinié, E.	“Chansons à boire et à manger”, compilation of songs about food and drink.	Kirchhof, lute	Reader’s Digest Selection	songs 1, 7 & 11 on cd #3 3 cds 3238 1-3	2001
Bataille, G. (arr.) Vincent	“La France en chansons”, compilation of French songs.	Jacobs, lute	Reader’s Digest Selection	songs 1 & 3 on cd #3 5 cds 3235 1-5	2001
Beethoven, L. van	Bonner Lieder op.52	Krumbach, clavichord & fortepiano	Mus. Heritage Soc.	reissue MHS-4346	
Biber, F.I. von	<i>Sacred Choral Works (Laetatus sum)</i>	Gillesberger Concentus musicus	Warner Classics	2564 691818-4 reissue of the 1969 recording	2008
Blankenburg, Q. van v.Eyck, Sweelinck i.a.	Musica Neerlandica (Dutch music from the 17 <sup>th</sup> century)	Apollo Ensemble	Apollo Ensemble	SCB 95193 (7 cds)	1994- 1995
Boismortier, J.B. de	Les Quatres Saisons	Arion ensemble	CBC records	MVCD 1098	1997
Bosmans, H. Voormolen, A.	in Anthology of 20 <sup>th</sup> C Dutch Song/Lied		CBS records	LSP 14514	1981
Bruckner, Gerard von	Chamber Music and Requiem <i>Requiem</i>	Vonk, Groot Omroepkoor [Netherlands Radio Chorus], Radio Filharmonisch Orkest	Document, Culemborg	DOC 1101 radio AVRO, 9/12 1978	2011
Bruhns, N.	Deutsche Barock Kantaten IV	Lejeune Ricerca consort	Ricerca Ricerca ECCO	RIC-048035-7 reissue RIC 8001/2 re-release 2 cds RIC 291	1988/9 2010
Buxtehude, D.	Deutsche Barock Kantaten II	Lejeune Ricerca consort	Ricerca	RIC-041016	1987
Buxtehude, D.	Deutsche Barock Kantaten VII	Ricerca consort	Ricerca	RIC 094076	1992
Caccini, Frescobaldi, Monteverdi	<i>Amarilli mia bella</i>	Farr, harpsichord	Etcetera	etc-1056	1988
Caccini, F.	<i>O che nuovo stupor</i> on “La magie de Noël”, compilation of Christmas songs	Ricerca consort	Reader’s Digest Selection	song 4 on cd #3 reissue on 4 cds 3354 1-4	1997
Carissimi, i.a.	Mottetti a basso solo	Lejeune Ricerca consort	Ricerca	RIC-054032	1988
Cilea, Francesco	<i>Adriana Lecouvreur (Quinault)</i>	Vernizzi Groot Omroepkoor	OperaFanatic	OF 23 (2 cds) (recorded in 1965)	1993

COMPOSER	TITLE	PERFORMERS	EDITION	NUMBER	YEAR
	Chefs-d'oeuvre de la Musique Classique Français		Readers Digest Selection	164493 1-6 F 10004 FF/1-6	2010
Handel, G.F.	Selection from <i>Messiah</i>	Parmentier Ars Musica	U. of Michigan	SM 0017	1981
Handel, G.F.	<i>Admeto, Re di Tessaglia</i> HWV 22 (Meraspè)	Curtis Il Complesso Barocco	Virgin Veritas	3 cds remastered VMT 5613692	1997
Handel, G.F.	<i>Six Handel Operas</i> (incl. <i>Admeto, Re di Tessaglia</i> HWV 22)	Curtis Il Complesso Barocco	EMI / Virgin Classics	reissue on cd 5099969586224	2009
Haydn, J. Voormolen, A.	“Het puik van zoete kelen” compilation of radio broadcasts by famous Dutch singers		Philips Dutch Masters	10 cds 464 385.2, nd	1999
Huygens, C	<i>Pathodia Sacra et Profana</i>	Ameling / Satoh / ter Linden / Uittenbosch	Ameling	<a href="https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=iamO29ilEx8">https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=iamO29ilEx8</a>	2021
Krieger, Purcell, Lully, Scarlatti	Songs of the Baroque Era	Leonhardt Leonhardt Consort	Warner: 50 years Das Alte Werk	reissue on cd DAW 2564 69671 9	2007
Mont H. du	Cantica sacre, Motets a deux voix	Ricercar consort	Ricercar		1990
Monteverdi, C.	<i>Il Combattimento</i> and other madrigals	Leonhardt Leonhardt Consort	Teldec	reissue as SAWT 9577B	1978
Monteverdi, C.	<i>Il Ritorno d'Ulisse in Patria</i> (Eumete)	Harnoncourt, Concentus musicus Junge Kantorei	Teldec Warner classics	reissue on 3 cds DAW 2564 69614 2	1993 2007
Monteverdi, C.	<i>l'Orfeo</i> (Apollo, Pastor 4, Spirito 3)	Harnoncourt, Concentus musicus Capella Antqua München	Teldec Warner classics	reissue 2 cds 69645-5 DAW 2564 69645 8	1993 2007
Monteverdi i.a.	Motetti ed Arie a Basso Solo	Lejeune, Ricercar Consort	Ricercar	RIC 054032	1988
Purcell, Huygens i.a.	House Vocal Music	Suzuki	Sohbi Anonimus	SHCC-1001	1991
Purcell, H.	Purcell edition, vol. 4		Warner Classics	2564 691390	
Purcell, H.	Anthems	Leonhardt, Leonhardt consort Willcocks, Choir of King's College	Warner: 50 years Das Alte Werk	reissue on cd DAW 2564 686699 2	2007
Purcell, H. (Clarke, Blow i.a.)	<i>Leçons de Ténèbres</i> (reissue of <i>Harmonia Sacra 1688</i> )	René Jacobs Concerto Vocale	Harmonia Mundi France	reissue on cd HMA 1951133	2004
Rameau, J.P.	<i>Zais</i> (Oromasès)	Leonhardt, La petite bande Collegium Vocale Gent	Edition Stil	(reissue 3 cds) 1010 S 77	1979 1988
Schubert, F.	<i>Die Winterreise</i> D 911	van Immerseel, fortepiano	Channel classics	CCS-0190	1989
Schubert, F.	<i>Die schöne Müllerin</i> D 795	Crawford, fortepiano	Musica Omnia	MO 0107	2001
Schubert, F.	<i>Winterreise</i> D 911	Crawford, fortepiano	Musica Omnia	MO 0108	2001
Schubert, F. (Schumann, R.)	<i>Die Forelle</i> (The Trout) (and piano quintets)	Crawford, fortepiano (Schröder, Atlantis ensemble)	Musica Omnia	MO 0212	2007

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Schubert, Fauré i.a.	<i>La bonne chanson</i>	van Immerseel, fortepiano	Channel classics	CCS 8295	1990
Schubert, F. Schumann, R.	<i>Schwanengesang</i> D 957 <i>Dichterliebe</i> Op.48	Slowik, fortepiano	Musica Omnia	MO 0102	2001
Schumann, R.	<i>Dichterliebe</i> (as part of a compilation of works by Robert Schumann on 6 cds)	Slowik, fortepiano	Readers Digest Sélection 2010	reissue of MO 0102 164733 (cd 6)	2001
Schütz, H.	<i>Seven Last Words</i> SWV 478 <i>St. Luke Passion</i> SWV 480	Jürgens, Leonhardt consort, Monteverdi Choir, Hamburg	Warner: 50 years Das Alte Werk	reissue on cd DAW 2564 69612 8	2007
Schütz, H. Purcell, Sweelinck i.a.	Baroque Baritone Duets	Gould, bariton, Luckhardt, viola da gamba, Verhoef, organ & harpsichord	private recording		2002
Sebastiani, J.	<i>St. Matthew Passion</i>	Pierlot, Ricercar Consort	Ricercar	RIC 160 144 re-released with Schütz RIC 280	1995 2009
Stölzel, G.H.	“Aus der Tiefe” Deutsche Barok Kantaten VIII	van Nevel Ricercar consort	Ricercar	RIC-103086/87	1991
Stradella, Alessandro	<i>Esule delle Sfere</i>	Paiement UCSC Chamber singers	Mus. Heritage Soc. Bongiovanni	MHS 513257 T recorded in 1990 GB 2165	1992 n.d.
Sweelinck, J.P. i.a.	Christmas Motets	Groot Hemony Ensemble	Stemra	C11515	2004
Sweelinck, J.P. i.a.	Christmas Motets	Groot Hemony ensemble	Stichting Hemony	<a href="http://www.hemony.nl">www.hemony.nl</a>	2010
Sweelinck, Schuyt, Hacquart, i.a.	400 Years of Dutch Music, vol 1	Koopman, Het Residentieorkest, Nederlands Kamerkoor	Olympia	OCD 500	1990
Telemann, G.P.	“Du aber, Daniël, gehe hin” & sonatas	Wenzinger Baroque Performance Institute	Gasparo Galante	reissue GG 1008 CD	1997
Telemann, G.P.	<i>Der Tag das Gerichts (The Day of Judgement)</i>	Harnoncourt, Consentus Musicus Monteverdi Choir Hamburg	Warner: 50 years Das Alte Werk	reissue on 2 cds DAW 2564 69729 8	2007
Telemann, G.P.	“Du aber, Daniel” Deutsche Barok Kantaten VI	Ricercar consort	Ricercar	RIC-079061 re-released in “Telemann Treuerkantaten” RIC 224	1990 2007
Telemann, G.P.	Cantatas and Chamber music	Wond’rous Machine	Stradivarius	STR 33687	2004
Vogelweide, W.v.d.	“Troubadours, Trouvères, Minstrels” (reissue of “Minnesang und Spruchdichtung”)	Binkley Studio der Frühen Musik, München	Teldec Warner: 50 years Das Alte Werk	2 cds 4509 97938 2 2 cds DAW 2564 69645 5	1996 2007

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Weber, C.M.von	Songs, Volume 1 Volume 2	Watkinson, Partridge, Vester, Beths, Schröder, Bijlsma, Hoogland	Seon, Pro-Arte	PAL-1048 PAL-1062	1981 1982
Weber, C.M.von	Ten Scottish Melodies, 28 songs, chamber music	Schröder Vester, Beths, Bijlsma, Hoogland	Mus. Heritage Soc. Seon	MHS 834383 S reissue on 2 cds 63191	1976 1997
Weckman, M.	<i>Complete cantatas</i> Deutsche Barock Kantaten IX	Pierlot, Ricercar consort, Capella Sancta Michaelis	Ricercar	RIC 109097-98 re-release RIC 216, 2cds	1996 2005
Zelenka, Johann D.	<i>Lamentationes Jeremiae Prophetae</i>	Roderick Shaw Academy of the Begijnhof	Globe	GLO 6051 (recorded in 1990)	2000
	<i>Sweet was the Song</i> traditional Carols	Slowik Smithsonian Chamber Players	Smithsonian collection	ND 040 A-22008	1990