



MAGAZINE: Üben & Musizieren

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Rein, Verena

The Liberation of Sound
New Directions in Classical Singing

"When I am on stage, I simply want to make music, not fight against the material." Which singer doesn't have this wish, articulated by soprano and vocal coach Verena Rein? Unfortunately, only a few are able to fulfill this wish at some point in time - and if they are, it is often preceded by an odyssey through various different vocal schools, all seemingly contradictory. What is right, what wrong? Why is it so difficult to go in new directions with vocal technique? Why are old singing commandments neither challenged nor reviewed, even if they cause audible damage to the voice? The search for answers to the abovementioned questions and the implicit wish for the liberation of her own voice lead Verena Rein to the Bulgarian tenor Peter Gougloff, who, through longstanding research as a physician, speech pathologist, and singer, concluded that the mid-central vowel "shwa" has an enormous significance for a freeflowing tone. The integration of this sound in every vowel results in an ideal overtone-spectrum, guaranteeing facility and carrying capacity. In *The Liberation of Sound*, Verena Rein introduces a vocal technique based on the Italian Bel Canto technique and the knowledge of the central vowel's significance which holds the promise of maximum elasticity and pulsing permeability for singers in all ranges. For this, she works with three professional singers (soprano, alto, baritone) on a specialized tongue technique, which uses the tongue as a "guide", steering the sound into specific resonating areas. The finely worked-out rotation of the tongue doesn't only solve register problems, but also enables a very differentiated breath flow. The important role this technique plays both audibly and visually is recognizable for the spectator and especially the listener: the sound freely floats through the space, while the singer's expression shows authentic naturalness and ease. In addition to the singers' commentary, in which they critically and understandably outline their experiences, Verena Rein completes the singers' vital skills with a self-developed performance training, which integrates the vocal liberations with body language and the holistic expressivity of the individual. Fascinating are her demonstrations of the clear and simple relationship between text, music, and physicality, which can be realized by both professionals and amateurs without prior knowledge. As a singer, I am still surprised at what palpable relief the use of this tongue technique, also demonstrated through helpful sketches, provides!

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