

L'hommage à Richard Miller ci-dessous, a été publié dans le Journal of Singing de la NATS (association américaine de professeurs de chant : <http://www.nats.org/>) dans la rubrique « Letters to the editor ». Il s'agit du Vol. 63, N° 3 de janvier février 2007 (Richard Miller Festschrift), à la p. 259/260.

Merci beaucoup, Richard!

I met Richard Miller for the first time in 1983 at the Royaumont Foundation Voice Center (Royaumont Abbey is located 35 km north of Paris). This was the beginning of a very pleasant and important period in France during which we worked to improve our capacity to grow in the pedagogy of singing. I attended Royaumont as an Italian coach and taught in professional workshops directed by Lorraine Nubar from the Julliard School. Being very curious and eager to acquire knowledge, I also sat in on Richard Miller's teaching sessions and masterclasses. It was a tremendous discovery!

A few years later, I had the great good fortune to be accepted into professional courses for the continuing education of singing teachers directed by Richard Miller (1990-1991). These courses were underwritten by the French Government. It was the best opportunity to get a good education on how to teach vocal technique. Many trainees, including myself, easily obtained national certification that enabled us to teach singing in French conservatories.

Thanks to Inge Theis (Inspector in the Culture Ministry's *Direction de la Musique*), we were able to build up our association, the AFPC (*Association Française des Professeurs de Chant*), initially presided over by Régine Crespin. The Culture Ministry proved a reliable sponsor, allowing us to organize many workshops with R. Miller. There we learned a healthy approach to the teaching of singing, an approach based on Miller's broad American experience with NATS, developed after extensive scientific-cultural research and travel throughout the world.

In fact, NATS quickly became a model for building our French association with the same "spirit": our first code of ethics was directly inspired by that of NATS.

Meeting a singing teacher like Richard Miller was not at all usual in France in the 1980s.

His approach was a real shock for many of the French singing teachers invited to Royaumont to discuss their pedagogy and to found their association. He quickly demolished many flawed opinions contrary to the physiology of singing and the scientific approach to vocal technique that in France had been completely submerged by the predominance of "images".

I was quite a "difficult pupil," asking him all the time to convince me about his approach and notions, and I am sure he understood the necessity of obtaining from our side both a sense of freedom and good understanding of his teaching.

In thanking R. Miller, we are grateful first and foremost for his good attitude towards pedagogy.

This attitude remains dangerously frail in France; perhaps because it is human to "forget" good things and to repeat the same errors...

For many of us, he numbers among a handful of prominent figures that have marked our lives, giving us the confidence to implement our passion for singing in all its expressions..., and that in spite of his avowed refusal of styles other than "classical" (*nobody's perfect!*).

- Do you remember, Richard, when I sang "for you" Charlie Chaplin's song *Smile* during a mini-lesson? - What we learned with Richard was the essence of vocal technique!

Each one went after in his own direction.

Merci beaucoup Richard, many of us will never forget you, and the new generation of French singers and singing teachers is gradually adopting your point of view on singing technique as expressed in *La structure du chant* (the title of the French translation of *The Structure of Singing*), which has been an absolute bestseller among books sold in France for many, many years now ...

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