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## Letters to the Editor

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from Ronald Weitzman

Solomon Volkov puts the record straight (Letters, *Tempo* 207) in pointing out that Yuri Kochnev, and not Maxim Shostakovich, conducted the 1968 stage première in Leningrad of *Rothschild's Violin*. As well as expressing gratitude for this correction, I should wish to add that at the time of writing my article (*Tempo* 206), *Shostakovich Reconsidered* had not been published. The latter contains further astute speculation that Shostakovich may have orchestrated most of Fleischmann's opera. Still, the following is surely clear: Shostakovich, as I understand it, gives exact information as to which bars he himself orchestrated, and, in the absence of evidence of anything written in Fleischmann's own hand, I am ready to believe that the master is giving the pupil what is the pupil's due. I incline to such a view because Shostakovich himself was so insistent that orchestration is intrinsic to compositional integrity. This being the case, it is fair to conjecture that his most gifted student would have gone at least some way in indicating, right at the genesis of his work, the orchestration of his opera – in a form of 'shorthand', if not in full score.

As to Toccata Press's lengthy new book on

Shostakovich, with many a contribution of deep significance not mentioned in John Shand's review, I would wish to draw attention in particular to the essay by Timothy Jackson, 'Dmitri Shostakovich: The Composer as a Jew' – nobody should ignore this probing analytical argument by a scholar who, with an ego mercifully becalmed, is clearly hearing and comprehending what he analyzes.

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from Paul Zukofsky

Re: the Leifs Discography in *Tempo* 208, specifically *Baldr*. At the risk of self-promotion, you may wish to tell your readers that my recording has always been and is still available through Albany Music Distributors, of Albany, N.Y., USA, fax no: 1-518-436-0643 and more recently through Liebermann Tonträger, of Bayreuth, Germany, fax 0049-921-757-7780.

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### Record review (concluded from p.59)

offer an easeful, unhurried approach to structure. Pott leaves them standing: his is only a few minutes short of an hour in duration. But, like Ronald Stevenson's 80-minute *Passacaglia on DSCH*, the listening itself doesn't seem to require the full clock-time the piece claims it lasts. That has something to do with the direct tunefulness of the material: if Pott is unabashed about its length, he is similarly unfazed about speaking in an expansive late-Romantic language of the kind that Schmidt, Marx and Miaskovsky enjoyed (not that there's any stylistic contiguity). Hearing Pott out, even for an hour, is thus no burden: his manner puts you at your ease, perhaps because of its sheer honesty – the composition of the Cello Sonata was first triggered by the

death of Pott's father and later spurred by that of his mother, making its elegiac tone as natural as the patient unfolding of the structure. Two piano pieces, *Hunt's Bay* of 1994 and *Farewell to Hirta* from nine years earlier, played by Pott himself, fill out the disc. 'Hirta' is the Gaelic name of the St Kilda group of islands, and *Farewell to Hirta*, which evokes the feelings of the remnants of the island community as, in 1930, they left their home forever, is especially moving, as eloquent in six minutes as the Cello Sonata in its 55. It's all evocations of the sea and Gaelic music – Debussy in the Hebrides, if you will – with that strange emotional ambivalence of a major-key lament.

Martin Anderson

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