

A charming memoir and an important text

BY HILLARY HAUSER

Upon finishing the last sentence of Karl Geiringer's "This I Remember," my chief reaction consisted of tears, and also a regret that I never met Geiringer. After all, the famed musicologist lived in Santa Barbara and he was by all accounts gentle and kind, willing to take time to talk to any of us common folk.

Geiringer, who died just before his 90th birthday on Jan. 10, 1989, was an amazing man whose published works on many aspects of classical music are so numerous, his titles, all by themselves, fill a 50-page booklet. His writings, now important foundations for the studies of students and researchers of music, include numerous histories of music and the very important biographies of Brahms, Haydn and the Bach family, as well as books on the evolution of musical instruments. He also edited scores of musical works that before were undiscovered, unknown.

"This I Remember" is a charming, gentle memoir that is also an important text for any serious music student or researcher. It is the exact word-for-word dictation of Geiringer's memories, thoughts and opinions, transcribed by his second wife, Santa Barbara concert pianist, Bernice Shapiro-Geiringer.

What strikes me most about "This I Remember" is its unique portrayal of the cele-

REVIEW: *This I Remember: Memoirs of a Life in Music*

By Karl Geiringer with
Bernice Geiringer
Fithian Press
\$24.95, hardback

brated Musikverein in Vienna, where Geiringer did some of his most significant early work.

The Musikverein, which houses the famed Gesellschaft der Musikfreunde museum, the offices of the Vienna Philharmonic, the piano firm of Bosendorfer, and the music publishing firm of Universal Editions, is one of the world's most important receptacles of the original scores and manuscripts of immortal composers like Beethoven and Brahms.

There, Geiringer worked on preserving treasured musical manuscripts, letters, books and pictures. There, too, he discovered a collection of hitherto unread correspondence addressed to Brahms, letters that provided unique insight to the composer and a foundation upon which Geiringer and his first wife, Irene, wrote a biography on Brahms that is now considered one of the most important books on the composer ever written.

Irene and Karl Geiringer collaborated on many musical projects during their long married life (over 50 years, until her death in Santa Barbara in 1983). She worked at Universal Edition, and together with Geiringer conducted and supervised the production of new scores, based on



Bernice Shapiro-Geiringer: Co-author of "This I Remember."

their research into notes left by their composers.

"This I Remember" includes some amusing accounts that provide insights to some of the world's great musical artists, many of whom came to the Gesellschaft for a visit. Geiringer remembers how the great Arturo Toscanini came to the museum just moments before conducting Schubert's C Major Symphony at the Musikverein and requested from him the autographed score.

"He looked at the score for a moment, reverently kissed it, then said, 'Now I am ready to conduct the symphony,'" Geiringer recalls, adding that he didn't know whether to be angry or amused.

In similar fashion Geiringer recounts his meetings with celebrated musicians like Rachmaninoff, Paul Hindem-

ith, Ernst Krenek and Wilhelm Furtwangler. He discusses his research into the work of Haydn and his reconstruction of little-known Haydn scores. His biography of Haydn is, along with his biography of Brahms, considered one of the most important musical biographies.

Geiringer's book is full of personal trials and tribulations, too. He remembers how he arrived at the Musikfrunde on the morning of March 13, 1938, to find SS guards blocking the entrance to the building; being Jewish, he immediately emigrated with Irene and their two sons to England, where he had become well known for his BBC programs.

But the Geiringers had to leave England, too, because "enemy aliens" (which included deportees from Austria and Germany) were being rounded up and sent to the Isle of Man. Because of this, the Geiringers came to America, where he began teaching at Boston University — medieval and Renaissance music, counterpoint and composition, and finally music history. He came to UCSB in 1962. Then 63, he convinced university officials to let him work beyond the established retirement age of 65.

He contributed to the university — and to the music world at large — almost 20 more years of his work, bringing to UCSB vast acquisitions of music libraries, collections of recordings and microfilms, and publishing ventures that included his own research into ancient, now-obsolete instruments.

"This I Remember" con-

tains valuable insights (vocal performances should be given in their original texts, rather than translated into the language of the country in which the performance is given). It also describes his love for climbing mountains, including an outing in the Eastern Tirol where Irene slipped and broke her foot, which led to her decline and eventual death.

Geiringer describes frankly his shattered feelings, how "a kind of fog, a paralysis of thinking and feeling descended." And how his meeting Bernice Shapiro in 1986 restored him. The two were married in 1987, and "This I Remember" was finished in December 1988. Less than a month later, Geiringer was gone.

Bernice Geiringer, who is carrying on her husband's lecture work around the country, provides a sentimental epilogue about the events surrounding their brief and happy marriage, and tells of Geiringer's death.

Of the book, she recently said, "Young people need a role model. This book shows how, if you live a life with ideals and good work ethics, it will lead to happiness."

(Bernice Shapiro-Geiringer will sign copies of "This I Remember: Memoirs of a Life in Music" at 3 p.m. Sunday at the Earthling Bookshop.)

Hillary Hauser is a free-lance writer and concert pianist who lives in Summerland.

Music

Sherill Milnes reflects a passion for his art

By Hillary Hauser
News-Press Staff Writer

Opera is one of the highest levels of musical artistry, one that combines more elements of human expression than most other musical forms — be it about death, passion, hate, or jealousy, says baritone Sherill Milnes.

Milnes, one of the world's great operatic stars (and one of the few super-greats produced in the United States) will sing operatic highlights from "Carmen," "Tannhauser," "Così fan tutti" and "Otello" at the Lobero Theater tonight, and as he talked about his program, and about the master classes he will give at the Music Academy of the West, one realized there is nothing more satisfying to Milnes than music.

He is an international star who ex-

udes a down-home charm probably rooted in his Illinois youth. He is big, like a football player, with a forceful voice that matches his large personality. He sings in Italian, German, French, Spanish and every other language, and yet he can still say "yeah," as an affirmative answer to a question, just like anyone else in America who has never spoken a foreign word in their lives.

Pre-med studies dropped

But when it comes to music, there is sophistication and drama and passion in Milnes, and in the year during his college days in which he gave up his music for pre-med studies, it was obvious to him that he couldn't live without expressing these qualities in his life, through music, he said. He

studied a wide variety of instruments, ranging from violin to tuba, but finally settled upon the voice as the most highly developed instrument there is.

He said that many people shut out classical music from their lives because the word itself is "dull and boring."

"Classical is a terrible term," said Milnes, adding that he doesn't use the word, or uses it as little as possible.

He also doesn't like the word "talent" or "technique," and instead speaks of "heredity" and "muscle discipline."

Milnes, who said that "everyone should sing in the shower, because it's healthy," is one of the world's best known baritones. He has won audiences across the globe with his portrayals of such operatic characters as the meddling Germont in "La Traviata," or the evil Iago in "Otello." He has sung in great opera houses all over the world with tenors such as Pavarotti and Plácido Domingo, and with sopranos such as Beverly Sills. Europeans, he said, respond more emotionally — on the whole — to performances.

Music is emotional

Music, Milnes said, is "primarily emotional, secondarily intellectual." A listener does not need to study or even understand music to enjoy it, he added.

"The only thing necessary is to open up," he said.

Opera is the "biggest reacher-out" to the emotions, Milnes said, and arias — those operatic showcases that stand out from all the rest of the action — are emotional subjects treated elaborately.

"The purpose of the aria is to take a single emotion and sprrraayy it out," Milnes emphasized. "Love — jealousy



SHERILL MILNES

a performance of "Otello" which he did with Plácido Domingo in Hamburg, in which the audience cheered and clapped for over 30 minutes.

"A 10 second applause for an aria is reasonable, and 20-30 seconds is wonderful," said Milnes. "Can you imagine 33 minutes, or 35 minutes? Our smile muscles wouldn't work any more."

While in Santa Barbara, Milnes will give opera master classes at the Music Academy of the West's Abravanel Hall at 8 p.m. Wednesday and Thursday, and on Friday evening, he will give a class in art-song, or liedert. All classes are open to the public, for a \$5 admission.

Master classes interesting