

David Aldeborgh and the Monteverdi-Choir Recording Project

Much of the information in this essay comes from Peter Eickhof, the bass soloist in the Monteverdi-Choir recording of the Bruckner Requiem. It was recounted in 2016 when Mr. Eickhof was 79 years old. It was told to Stefan Mühlenweg who has provided the details to me. Mr. Mühlenweg is a member of the Monteverdi-Choir since 1985, so he just missed the 1984 sessions that David Aldeborgh set up in Jerusalem with Professor Jürgen Jürgens, the director and founder of the choir.

David Aldeborgh had planned to record in Jerusalem, in July of 1984, all works for both Volumes (I and II). The Requiem was included in this recording plan. However, only the works that eventually appeared on Volume I were recorded there and, in the end, it was only Volume I that was released commercially on LP by Jerusalem Records.

One of the complications that slowed down the project was that Assen Vassilev, the young Bulgarian bass soloist heard in the Volume I recordings, came unrehearsed to the sessions in Jerusalem. This was the usual procedure for Bulgarian professional singers at that time - they were used to rehearsing from the beginning together with the complete ensemble. On the other hand, Jürgen Jürgens did expect that all soloists be prepared. Now there was not enough time for Assen Vassilev to learn both the Missa Brevis and the Requiem. At the last minute Jürgen Jürgens asked Peter Eickhof to learn the Requiem's bass part in the hotel room in Jerusalem just prior to the sessions.

But during the recordings it became more and more clear that the complete program for two LP's was too much for the scheduled time.

Eventually, it was decided that all the recordings for Volume II would be postponed half a year and the recordings were to be made in Hamburg. Due to the change in venue, the orchestra employed was the Choir's own orchestra, the Camerata Accademica Hamburg which was founded by Jürgen Jürgens some years earlier in order to have a special orchestra for concerts and recordings with the Monteverdi-Choir.

Wilfried Jochens, the tenor-soloist and Werner Kauffmann, the organist were from Hamburg. The female soloists were flown in from Israel. On this occasion, the recordings were not made by the editors/engineers from Jerusalem Records, but by personnel from Sender Freies Berlin (SFB) with whom the Choir had an established working relationship.

Once the sessions in Hamburg were completed, additional sessions were scheduled for November of 1988. Those recordings were intended to be used along with the earlier Hamburg sessions for a double LP album, but the LP project was never realized.