

SIR GEORG SOLTI

Dr David C F Wright (1989)

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This article is somewhat dated but includes useful information

I met Sir Georg Solti and interviewed him. He was a willing interviewee and was very pleased to talk about himself, which he did... incessantly.

In some senses, Georg Solti is not a good conductor insomuch that he is very unpopular with orchestras and with just cause, it is claimed. I have a sheaf of letters from those who have played in his orchestras and soloists who have worked with him. He is known as The Screaming Skull. He also has a deplorable habit of blackening the characters of living composers and musicians in a vitriolic fashion which is slanderous. You cannot harm the dead but you can destroy the living!

He is not alone in this. Barbirolli was a dreadful conductor unable to conduct in 5/4 time for example and although he was contracted to play difficult or modern works he always backed out and left those performances to George Weldon thus confirming that Weldon was a far better conductor than Barbirolli, which he certainly was. The other problem with Barbirolli was that he was an alcoholic and between the various pieces he was conducting in a concert he would always have two double Scotches, one in each hand, in the wings when he left the stage and before returning to the podium.

(see separate article on [Barbirolli](#))

Why is Solti a poor conductor? For the same reason as Simon Rattle is a poor conductor. Solti disregards obvious and valid instructions in the composer's scores and when a brave member of the orchestra pointed out Solti's deviance he would scream back that he knew better than anyone in the orchestra. On some occasions someone in the orchestra would respond, "Yes, and you know better than the composer!" If Solti heard this, he would snarl and show his teeth and often go into a rage.

He would often tell a woodwind or brass player that they were playing something wrong or he wanted it played a special way. The instrumentalist would politely reply that what Solti was asking was not possible on the instrument. Solti, who was not a wind player, would not have it. He would argue even though he knew he was wrong and had been proved wrong.

He is autocratic and never wrong, and with this attitude, he is very unpleasant.

His egotism causes him to denigrate other musicians. He asserted that both Bartok and Kodaly were traitors to Hungary as they were communists. This is completely untrue. And his performance of Kodaly's superb Dances of Galanta with the London Philharmonic Orchestra is simply ghastly. There is no control, no leadership, everyone is all over the place and several members of the orchestra admitted that Solti did not know what he was doing.

On the other hand, his performance of Elgar's tedious Symphony no. 2 with the same orchestra is superb, partly because it does not sound like Elgar and because Solti does not indulge in the nauseating nobilementes or drag the music out. With soloists and the Vienna Philharmonic Orchestra he gave a stirring account of Richard Strauss's Salome but it is over the top and eccentric. His recording with the Chicago Symphony Orchestra of Bartok's Hungarian Sketches does not follow the score whereas his predecessor with this orchestra, the great Fritz Reiner, gave an accurate reading of this work and it is a far better performance.

Solti was very severe on Reiner and this was due of his obvious jealousy of him and Solti's quest to be superior. It is true that Reiner was a perfectionist and he did sack members of the orchestra if they were unable to meet his standards, which were very high, but this resulted in orchestra being a really great orchestra. Yet Solti does not say a good thing about Reiner.

Solti was born on 21 October 1912 in Buda, Hungary. His sister, Lily was born in 1904. His father moved the family to Veszprem where he continued in his Jewish faith. With the collapse of the Austro-Hungarian Empire in 1918, the family returned to Buda but had to witness the Russian Civil War between the Reds and the Whites. It upset Georg and he retained a phobia of uniforms and anyone wearing one. In 1919, Hungary was taken over by the Reds, the communists, under Bela Kun which proved a difficult time for Jews. Admiral Horthy eventually won control of Hungary whose politics were now extreme right-wing. Bartok and Kodaly were treated like dirt and falsely accused by the Soltis as being Communist sympathizers.

Georg started school but the standard of education was poor. He developed a dislike for religion of all kinds and became a rebel and yet he was to say that he believed in God because of the genius of Mozart. He was taught at school not to trust certain nations and types of people. He called this fascist indoctrination.

As a boy, he loved football and to sit on he piano when his cousin Elizabeth played it. He took piano lessons but he did not wish to name her as his teacher or give her any credit. He did, however, mention his second piano teacher, Mrs Koczy. At the age of ten he entered the Erno Fodor School of Music. Later, he went to the Franz Liszt Academy and studied with various tutors including Arnold Szekeley whom Solti described as a small elegant, indeed vain figure who was always repeating things. If vanity was a fault in Szekeley then Solti had the same fault. Solti met the distinguished pianist Annie Fischer and when Szekeley caught pneumonia Bartok took over teaching the piano. Solti always complained that Bartok should have taught composition and that Bartok was wrong to say that composition cannot be taught.

To give another example of Solti's character assassination, he used to say that Bartok was a raving radical although he claimed to have respect for him. Yet he was to falsely accuse both Bartok and Kodaly of being communists. Solti also complained about Bartok's piano playing as being dry!

Solti also would lambast Kodaly with whom he had the privilege to study. Solti would say that Kodaly was completely mad or on the verge of madness, that he was fanatic and that his aesthetic face gave him a Christ-like appearance which offended Solti. But, sadly, said Solti, he also has a Lenin-type beard. Solti criticised Kodaly for extremism because he was a vegetarian, took cold water cures and went barefoot. He went to the Academy like this sometimes and Solti complained that Mrs Kodaly, Emma Sandor, was not a beauty and Kodaly only married her for her money.

William Walton did not like Kodaly either but Kodaly was always kind to his students. His gentleness was reflected in the fundamental goodness of his character.

Kodaly had his own method of study for his students beginning with sixteen-century counterpoint to the present time. Solti arrogantly said, "I mastered counterpoint. It was easy!" Few would agree with him. Kodaly believed in teaching singing to children because it was the most natural way to make music.

Solti would always carp on about Kodaly slighting him which was completely unfair. Kodaly was present in Salzburg in 1964 when Solti gave a performance of Mahler's Symphony no. 1 and Kodaly asked to see him and apologised for his once being unfriendly to Solti's mother but that she had produced a letter recommending young Solti and this letter was written by a political enemy.

Kodaly praised Solti's progress as a musician but Solti cannot speak of Zoltan Kodaly unless he adds some invective.

Solti was equally unpleasant about another teacher Leo Weiner who would bang his fist and shout at mistakes. "No one should do this," Solti used to say and yet he did likewise earning him the nickname of The Screaming Skull.

Erno Dohnanyi came in for severe criticism from Solti who presented him as a womaniser and a predator around women complaining that he did not take much interest in his students and that studying with him was a disaster. Again Solti picks out all the negative things and used to recall a time when Dohnanyi lost his way in the opening movement of Beethoven's C minor Sonata, Opus 13. Solti recalled the time when Dohnanyi and the violinist

Bronislaw Huberman, who had been married to Dohnanyi's second wife, Elsa Galafres, when the two men came to blows.

More carping from Georg Solti. He said that Jenő Hubay was a brilliant violinist and that he also married for money and was a notoriously bad conductor.

It beggars belief that all the faults Solti finds in other musicians are all inherent in him.

Believing that the best grounding in music was in conducting opera, Solti took a great interest in this genre. After graduating from the Academy, he applied to be a répétiteur at the State Opera and became assistant to Peto. Then he had a few singers as private pupils. He objected to one conductor, Anton Fliesicher, a fellow Jew, who had committed the cardinal sin of becoming a Christian and said that because this had happened a Jew would never be allowed to conduct in Budapest.

In 1932 Josef Krips, who was a successful conductor at Karlsruhe, took to Solti and made him his assistant and the first opera he coached Solti in was Lohengrin. The local paper got hold of the fact that Krips had employed a Jew and demanded his resignation. Solti moved to Mannheim to work there but Krips told him to go back to Budapest where the opera house re-employed him.

He visited the Salzburg Festival for the first time in 1936 and this corresponded with a flu epidemic and Toscanini asked him to coach some of the operas that he was contracted to conduct. This contact was picked up by the press in Budapest and Solti was to make his conducting debut there on 11 March 1938 in *The Marriage of Figaro*.

The threat of war in Europe caused Solti to want to escape and his friend, the conductor Antal Dorati, invited Solti to London. As soon as Solti arrived he carped about the English, their food, their hygiene and, of course, he spoke little English. He always found the British depressing and weird!

Chopin said the same!

Solti supervised rehearsals at Covent Garden. He also moaned that he hated conducting ballets. He felt that the dancers dictated speeds to him where as he felt that he had to follow the tempi he set..

He admitted that he hates most British music although he undertook the premiere of Michael Tippett's *Symphony no. 4* in his Chicago years. Understandably he deplores the music of Elgar and yet he likes Britten. Their respective eccentricities were compatible and they were both cowards when it came to supporting their countries in time of war.

With the war looming Solti sought work in Scandinavia but it was overcrowded with musical refugees. Switzerland was an avowed neutral country and so Solti went there earning his living as a pianist. Britten and his lover Peter Pears had fled to America

In 1943 Solti met Hedwig (Heidi) Oeschli. She was married to Professor Giterman, a member of parliament, and they had a son and, at the time of her meeting Solti, she was pregnant with her second child. She wanted to get away from her husband and to abandon her children. Later she became Solti's wife. They were together for twenty one years after which she married an Irish man but then died of liver cancer. Solti had now fallen in love with a BBC journalist Valerie Pitts whom he had met in 1964. They married on 11 November 1967.

At the end of the war Solti worked in Germany as director of the Munich Opera (1946-52), Frankfurt Opera (1952-61) and then went to Covent Garden, London (1961-71).

In Munich he was the director of the Bavarian State Opera making his debut on 1 November 1946 with Verdi's *Requiem*. He accompanied singers in lieder recitals. He conducted symphony concerts taking the solo part in Mozart's *Piano Concerto in E flat, K. 271*. He conducted *Carmen* and Bach's *St Matthew Passion*.

But he remained unpleasant. He would launch into ferocious attacks on composers. He slated Wilhelm Furtwangler. He called the young Swiss soprano, Inge Borkh, a “wild beast in every sense”.

Solti did receive some good influence, and none more so than that from Richard Strauss when he was very old and frail. He attended a rehearsal of *Rosenkavalier*. He corrected Solti on very many things but he died of heart attack a few weeks later on 8 September 1949. Solti conducted at his funeral.

A composer Solti came to admire in Munich was Werner Egk whose ballet *Abraxas* contained simulated copulations on stage. Solti, not being of decent morals, (he was a sexual predator around women) loved this and wanted to stage it, not for the music but for the sexuality. For the same reason Solti was interested in Egk's opera *Casanova* in London.

Egk was born at Auchschesheim, Bavaria in 1901 and was largely self-taught. He was a controversial figure, as indicated. He set *Peer Gynt* as an opera which was an obvious objection to Nazism. His music is seldom heard today.

Solti was very severe on Carl Orff who was “charming as a man” but whose “music is rubbish and in a dreadfully repetitive style”. He liked Karl Amadeus Hartmann but lampooned him for writing modern music and that his being a pupil of Schoenberg spelt disaster. Solti would say that Hartmann loved his music and his food and was brave to stay in Germany during the war. His brother was Adolf Hartmann, a successful painter. Karl lacked “self-discipline but was a lovely fellow,” said Solti

Curiously it was fellow Hungarians that Solti so despised. He was tenacious and utterly tiresome in his slander of Kodaly, Bartok and Dohnanyi.

It was in his years in Munich that Solti made his first gramophone recordings. This was in Beethoven's sublime *Kreutzer Sonata* with Georg Kulenkampff. Solti owes these opportunities to Rolf Liebermann, a very fine composer and musician in his own right, but only really known for his *Concerto for jazz band and symphony orchestra*.

Solti's debut with the Vienna Philharmonic was at the Salzburg Festival in 1951. He caused many upsets by his autocratic and very bossy and unrelenting attitude. Then he had major rows with the musical authorities in Munich. Around the time the conductor Hans Knappertsbusch had just been cleared of being a Nazi sympathizer and Solti was responsible for some of the scurrilous gossip. In addition Ferdinand Leitner was in demand. He was a far better musician and conductor and Solti hated him for that. Leitner did succeed Solti and then went on to Stuttgart.

Leitner was born in Berlin in 1912 where he studied with Artur Schnabel and Karl Muck becoming the assistant to Fritz Busch at Glyndebourne in 1935 before becoming the conductor of Berlin Opera 1943, Hamburg Opera in 1945-6 and Munich Opera 1946-7 and director of Stuttgart Opera from 1947 to 1969.

Solti made his debut in Frankfurt on 7 March 1952 performing *Carmen*. This was followed with his first performance of Verdi's *Othello* and he complained about the composer's dreadful orchestration and how he had to change some of it. That is further evidence of a conceited man and poor conductor. His performances were not good.

In Frankfurt he met Theodor Adorno who was an expert on modern music especially the second Viennese School. But he was also an authority on Mozart and Wagner. He recommended that Solti conduct Mahler particularly the *Symphony no. 9*. Solti had already conducted Mahler's *Symphony no. 4*, which is really awful piece, as a vehicle for the young American soprano Sylvia Stahlman

The meeting with Adorno did a lot for Solti. He subsequently conducted Berg's *Wozzeck* and learned to appreciate the greatness of Schoenberg's *Moses and Aaron*. To do this, Solti had to progress to the highest grade since to conduct these works you have to be competent and it is true that Solti went up several gears but he still was a poor conductor. He would continue to remonstrate with players and showed his ignorance of some instruments

and their capabilities. “Why can’t you flutes play the B below middle C?” was one of his totally ignorant remarks.

Solti first went to America in 1953 conducting the San Francisco Opera in Strauss’s Elektra, Wagner’s Die Walkure and Tristan. He complained about the singers being boring.

He was invited to guest conduct the Chicago Symphony Orchestra and this is where his venom poured out. Its conductor was the superlative Fritz Reiner and, to Solti, Reiner’s great sin was that he was Hungarian. Solti regarded himself as the only great Hungarian musician.

Reiner was born in Budapest in 1888 and graduated in law. He was the chorus master at Budapest opera in 1909 and the conductor of the Budapest Volksoper from 1911. In 1914 he became the chief conductor of the Dresden Opera where he stayed until 1922. He moved to the USA becoming the conductor of the Cincinnati Symphony Orchestra from 1922 to 1931. For ten years thereafter he was head of both the opera and orchestral departments of Curtis Institute. From 1938 to 1948 he was the conductor of the Pittsburgh Symphony Orchestra and then at the New York Metropolitan Opera until 1953 when he moved to Chicago where he died in 1963.

As we have said, Reiner was a perfectionist and he did sack orchestral players if they did not reach the standard to perform the works in the repertoire. But any of us who employ personnel and find them to be unsatisfactory would dismiss them.

Solti complained that Reiner was too autocratic which was rich coming from him. Solti was the most autocratic conductor in living memory. Not only that but he was ignorant about many basic music rudiments.

In the thirty years from 1961 onwards Solti commuted from London to Chicago. From 1961 to 1971 he conducted at Covent Garden. He was appointed director of the Chicago Symphony Orchestra in 1969. Between 1979 and 1983 he was the principal conductor of the London Philharmonic Orchestra.

In talking with Solti recently he showed his Elgarian arrogance. He was right on everything and if you disagreed with him you were wrong. He became very angry quickly and at trivial matters and if you did not praise him or acknowledge his greatness he would become abusive.

He would assert that it was he that made the Chicago Symphony Orchestra great. He was vastly superior to any of their previous conductors. They were all amateurs and Reiner was “ an incredibly stupid musician in not taking the orchestra on tour.”

The fact is that it was Reiner who made this orchestra great. Even today his recordings of many works cannot be bettered whether it is of music by Rossini, Bartok, Richard Strauss, Rachmaninov or anyone else.

Another evidence of a poor conductor is shown in how they treat soloists. It is the correct thing for the soloist and conductor to meet privately and discuss how they are going to perform a piece and settle any issues before they gave the performance. Solti, like Karajan, objected to this, stating that the soloist was subject to the conductor and what he said was not negotiable. The conductor reigned supreme and was not to be questioned. No wonder there were always altercations between Solti and soloists as there was with Karajan.

With Reiner it was different. He consulted his soloists fully. Jascha Heifetz said that Reiner was the finest conductor he ever worked with as does the bass-baritone Hans Hotter, who is eighty years old this year, as did William Kappell the stunning pianist who was killed in an air crash in 1953.

Solti conducted the Lyric Opera of Chicago in 1956 and 1957 and was full of complaints. The acoustics were so bad that music should not be performed there but he did and for two seasons. But he made enemies as he did everywhere he went. He had to be obeyed. Like Elgar, Karajan and Britten he was a megalomaniac, so proud and pompous and full of vanity.

His arrogance knew no bounds. He said, “I have an unique talent. If the players are willing to obey me in every

matter I can make any orchestra play to full capacity. There are many orchestras in the world that need me. Take Leonard Bernstein for example. He simply is an appalling conductor and the New York Philharmonic as a consequence is a very poor ensemble. They need me!”.

The New York Philharmonic had Solti as a guest conductor in 1957 when Stokowski and Mitropoulos were its conductors and therefore this was pre-Bernstein. Solti complained that Stokowski never followed the composer's score and was a maverick, another example of Solti's pot calling the kettle black.

His pride was under threat when he complained that the Vienna Philharmonic treated him with a we-know-better-than-you attitude. The orchestra were right but any challenge to Solti's vanity had to be put down.

Solti's ten years at Covent Garden were also full of his tiresome ways. He entered into a major row about Maria Callas who was now the object of his derision. He always had to have someone to deride. He would argue that Renata Tebaldi was a great singer and that Callas was not. He preferred the Australian Marie Collier in the role of Tosca and when she fell to her death in 1971 the insensitive Solti was still tenacious in his fire-and-brimstone condemnation of Callas.

There is no doubt that Callas was one of the few greatest singers of the twentieth century and one regrets that she let her career go because of her nine year relationship with Aristotle Onassis.

As in America and Austria, Solti is not liked in this country. At curtain calls he would have things thrown at him. His windscreen was scratched with 'Solti must go'. Clifford Curzon, who was both a nervous and eccentric pianist, could not work with him. "Every soloist has some sort of nerves before a performance. With Solti it was not nerves but always a panic attack!" he told us.

In conversation with Solti he told me that he did not understand why Covent Garden did not like him. Quite frankly, I do not believe this statement. He possessed that Elgarian pride and was a dictator and rode roughshod over his players and soloists. He also lacked basic instrumental knowledge which every good conductor has and his temper was sometimes very frightening.

I remember a concert he gave in which he played a Concerto for two pianos with Barenboim. He dominated and all through you could see he was directing Barenboim and seething at his fellow soloist because he was not playing it as Solti wanted it to be played. Solti's face owned much to a Boris Karloff monster. After the concert he said of Barenboim, "He is a Jew like me but he cannot play the piano whereas I can. And he is so arrogant!"

Views that Solti had made him unpopular. In the early 1960s his current musician for derision was Otto Klemperer. He says that Klemperer was a fine musician and before his semi-paralysis he was a brilliant conductor. That, in itself, is fair comment. But, as usual, Solti always had something negative to say. He would recall how if anyone in the audience coughed or sneezed Klemperer would turn and look at them and shout, 'Schweigen Sie' which translated means 'Shut up'.

When Solti called at Klemperer's apartment and found him naked (he later revised this to be half-naked) he had lipstick kisses all over his body. Solti then discussed with Klemperer what a dreadful conductor Toscanini was. Solti also lambasted Reginald Goodall whom, he said, lacked the basic technical skills a conductor must have. The very faults that Solti had he criticised in others.

With Valerie, Solti fathered two daughters Gabrielle (he was 57 at the time) and three years later Claudia was born.

But his carping continued. He was cruel about the mezzo Shirley Verrett. He liked Kiri Te Kanawa but not for musical reasons. He made ridiculous comments such as Placido Domingo was a great Wagnerian. In 1979 he conducted Parisfal for the Royal Shakespeare Company but was so objectionable that he was not invited back. He would shout at people, "The only good conductor is one who conducts opera regularly!". It is as absurd as Barbirolli repeating saying, "You cannot be a musician or even a music lover if you don't adore Elgar!" and these

statements were made forcibly and were meant.

Solti said to me that his best years were those spent in Chicago. For once he started well with the orchestra by telling them that he was not to make any changes but he still had to throw in a few barbs. He did not find the string section adequate and at auditions he hired no one as they were no good. He complained that there were no good orchestras in Latin America or Spain and Portugal was worse than useless. He complained about Reiner being too much of a disciplinarian but later recanted somewhat and congratulated the orchestra on their excellent time keeping and reliability whereupon, to his great discomfort, they replied that Reiner had instilled this in them. Solti flew into a rage.

He created a terrible fuss about the established system that each programme was performed three times; on Thursday evenings, Friday afternoons and Saturday evenings. Solti hated Friday afternoons and when it was pointed out to him that that was the only time certain subscribers could come he would explode with expletives and condemn the Friday afternoon mob!

Everything had to be done Solti's way. No other way was right.

The man who said he was not going to change anything did. He launched into a blistering attack on the orchestra whose morale was low and he abused the conductor who succeeded Reiner during 1963 to 1969, Jean Martinon, as useless.

I must admit that I did not take to Martinon as a person but as a musician he was first-rate. He was born in Lyon in 1910 and had the privilege of studying with Albert Roussel. During World War II he was a prisoner of war for two years which he bore with fortitude. He was the assistant conductor with Charles Munch and the London Philharmonic in 1946, was the conductor of Radio Eireann Symphony Orchestra from 1948- 1950, then the Lamoureux Orchestra from 1951 to 1958, the Israel Philharmonic from 1958-1960 and was in Chicago from 1963 to 1969. He then conducted the French Radio National Orchestra until 1975 and then the Hague Orchestra until 1976 the year he died. He was the first Frenchman to win the Mahler Medal and he was a very competent composer as well and his output includes four symphonies, two violin concertos (he was a very fine violinist himself), a cello concerto and two string quartets not to mention an opera and an oratorio.

But he was subject to Solti's venom.

Solti recounted to me that he took the Chicago orchestra on tours all over the world and when they arrived in Sydney, Australia, he saw a banner saying that Australia had waited two hundred years for Solti and the Chicago Symphony Orchestra. This pandered to his pride and he gushed about it until a brave member of the orchestra said to him, "This orchestra is not even one hundred years old and you are not yet eighty let alone two hundred!"

That musician was sacked.

Chicago was the happiest days in Solti's life because the orchestra and the management let him get away with everything. He boasted that he introduced a new repertoire with music by Americans such as Charles Ives, Gunther Schuller, Henze, De Tredici, Gould, Rochberg as well as 'weirdos' such as Husa, Panufnik and Tippett but that this was something Reiner or Martinon did not do and would not do. But that was simply not true.

In the late 1960s Solti attended a concert conducted by Karajan and was critical of both it and him. For once I agree with Solti. Karajan was a dreadful conductor in that he was the extreme autocratic and, like Britten, he was narcissistic. He altered what the composers wrote as well. If you see the videos he made with the Berlin Philharmonic, in which he was also the producer, there is little attention given to the orchestra or soloists but there are constant close ups of Karajan so that you can count the hairs in his left nostril. While Michael Kennedy can call him a great conductor, he was not. He altered the orchestration in many pieces which he conducted and was absolutely cruel to members of the orchestra and to soloists.

But Solti was like that. He had a short tenure with the Paris Orchestra who were to perform Salome on one

occasion with the wonderful Grace Bumbry in the title role. She flew in to Paris but was unwell. Solti said that she should be replaced and had Anja Silja in mind but she was otherwise engaged. Bumbry said she was a little better and would proceed and Solti, in a rare example of consideration, suggested she rehearsed at half voice since the orchestra needed such a rehearsal.

Just before the performance Solti saw how ill Bumbry was and he should have called the performance off but he wanted to look good in Paris and so this could not be done. Bumbry suffered and eventually had to leave the stage but Solti, in another example of gross irresponsibility and utter stupidity, carried on. How was the opera to finish without Salome?

The audience booed and hissed. Solti was a poor conductor.

When Solti conducted Wagner he was in the middle of more trouble with arguments with the director Michael Gruber and the abuse of Christa Ludwig, a singer of immense ability and experience. Solti did not complete The Ring cycle because of the troubles.

Solti is now 77. One wonders when he will give up. I understand that he is a loving husband and devoted father. But, as a conductor he is often impractical, insensitive, cruel to his orchestras and soloists, failing to understand some rudiments, alters music without authority or purpose, a dictator and a quarrelsome individual who is madly in love with himself and a bully. He has to be obeyed and he is seldom, if ever, wrong. That is what is meant by being a poor conductor.

Of course, the cynics will accuse me of blackening his character and being spiteful because I do not like him. His fans will be incensed at what I say and not only about him but also about Barbirolli and Rattle. If I am guilty of such things then Solti is also, but my remit is to tell the truth and this I have done and there are many who agree with me... even those who would prefer to keep the peace and say nothing. And included in 'the many' are musicians who have worked with him and are better judged to say so.

This article is not negative since it has a positive side in that it helps us to realise who the great conductors are and, usually, they are the humble ones who are only out to serve music itself such conductors as Reiner, Leinsdorf, Boult, Bryden Thomson and Norman del Mar.

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NOTE

Sir Georg Solti tape recorded my interviews with him.

Dr Wright gave this essay as a lecture in 1990 which was recorded on audio cassette and copies were distributed at that time. It was also published in Music Quarterly.

FOOTNOTE

Solti died eight years after this article was written. He died in France on 5 September 1997.