

## In Memoriam: David Hamilton

The ARSC community was saddened to learn of the death of David Hamilton, one of its longtime members and friends, on February 19, 2013. David was one of the world's most distinguished writers on music and historical recordings, and an important producer of historical classical releases.

David was born on January 18, 1935 in New York City. Educated at Princeton University, where his teachers included composer Milton Babbitt and musicologist Oliver Strunk, David earned a Bachelor of Arts degree in 1956 and a Master of Fine Arts in 1960. He also received a Master of Arts degree from Harvard University in 1960, where he studied with composer/theorist Walter Piston and musicologist Gustave Reese. He served as Music and Record Librarian at Princeton from 1960-1965, and was appointed Music Editor at the W.W. Norton Company in 1967. David was also Music Editor of *The Nation*, and was a Contributing Editor to *Opus*, *Opera Quarterly* and *High Fidelity* magazines. (Paula Morgan. "Hamilton, David" in *Grove Music Online*, *Oxford Music Online*. Oxford University Press, accessed 20 February 2013, [www.oxfordmusiconline.com/subscriber/article/grove/music/12277](http://www.oxfordmusiconline.com/subscriber/article/grove/music/12277).) He also authored the entries on Mussorgsky's *Boris Godunov*, Cilèa's *Adriana Lecouvreur*, and Borodin's *Prince Igor* for the three-volume series *Opera on Record* (Hutchinson & Co., 1979, 1983 & 1984).

A turning-point in David's career came when he authored the two-part article "Tristan in the Thirties" in the Fall 1976 and Spring 1977 issues of *Musical Newsletter*. In that thoroughly-researched article he demonstrated a knowledge of historic opera broadcasts that was second to none, and correctly identified two patches from a 1940 Metropolitan Opera broadcast of Wagner's *Tristan und Isolde* that the Met had inserted without comment into their Historic Broadcast Recording edition of the 8 February 1941 performance (MET 3, issued in 1976). David's observations were subsequently published as an addendum to Conrad L. Osborne's review of that set in *High Fidelity* magazine, and caught the attention of Dario Soria, President of the Metropolitan Opera Guild and Producer of the Met's Historic Broadcast series. When Soria died unexpectedly in 1980 while finishing work on MET 8, the December 14, 1940 performance of Verdi's *Un Ballo in Maschera*, David's proven expertise made him the logical choice to succeed Soria as producer of the Historic Broadcast releases, and he continued in that capacity until the series came to an end in 2008 (Soria's widow Dorle served as his co-producer until her death in 2002). He also conceived and served as programmer and annotator for the eight-volume Metropolitan Opera Guild series *One Hundred Years of Great Artists at the Met*, released in 1985 and 1986.

Arguably the crowning achievement in David's career as a producer was *The Mapleson Cylinders*, a six-LP collection of the complete extant recordings made by Metropolitan Opera librarian Lionel Mapleson between 1900 and 1904, issued by the Rodgers and Hammerstein Archives of Recorded Sound division of the New York Public Library in 1985. Working with Executive Producer David Hall, Curator of the R&H Archives, and Tom Owen, Chief Engineer at R&H, David undertook the task of correctly identifying each cylinder recording. This included documenting the composer, title, date, cast, conductor, and the specific contents of each cylinder, as well as determining the correct playback speeds, a monumental undertaking given the barely-

audible nature of many of these recordings. The meticulously-produced booklet prepared by David included the specific text for each operatic excerpt, along with an English translation. In 1987 *The Mapleson Cylinders* was nominated for a Grammy in the category of Best Historical Album.

David joined *ARSC* in 1967 and served our organization with distinction in several capacities. He was a Member at Large on the Board of Directors from 1982-1985, and again from 1999-2000, was the Classical Music Judge on the *ARSC* Awards Committee for many years, and also served a term on the Nominating Committee. David was a presenter at several *ARSC* conferences, and the author of a number of articles and reviews in the *ARSC Journal*. In 1996 he authored an article about *ARSC* for *Opera News* titled “Knights of the Grail: The Association for Recorded Sound Collections is Devoted to Safeguarding the Sounds of the Past.” ([www.operanews.com/Opera\\_News\\_Magazine/Archive/1996/10/Features/Knights\\_of\\_the\\_Grail.html](http://www.operanews.com/Opera_News_Magazine/Archive/1996/10/Features/Knights_of_the_Grail.html)).

Those who were privileged to know him will remember him for his brilliant mind and warm persona. He was an individual who could always be depended upon for conversation that was both pleasant and intellectually stimulating. Longtime *ARSC* Executive Director Peter Shambarger recalled: “Anyone who ever worked with David found him to be easy-going, yet knowledgeable in several areas. I worked with him on the Board of Directors between 1999 and 2001 and found his advice and historical perspective on *ARSC* to be very useful. He was also a careful listener, a quality not very many of us have all of the time. David gave his time unselfishly to *ARSC* until he was too sick to do so, even in the last years when he stepped down from the Awards Committee due to his illness.” Indeed. David will be missed by all who knew him both personally and through his outstanding contributions to our field. *Gary A. Galo*

*I am grateful to Peter Shambarger for providing dates and details on the various positions David held in ARSC.*