

GERHART HETZEL was one of the most respected musicians of our time. He was one of history's great concertmasters, an exceptional solo player and an inspiring leader for the entire Vienna Philharmonic. Everything he did — including his work as a gifted teacher and his performances as soloist with many other orchestras — was marked by a unique intensity, alertness to everyone around him, and the tireless pursuit of ever better results.

I had the honor as well as the phenomenal excitement of working with him for 16 years. From the beginning we enjoyed a wonderful rapport, not only in our work with the orchestra, but also in chamber music. He was at home in the entire repertoire of his instrument. Only a month before his sudden and untimely death we played a recital of Mozart sonatas together in Chicago, the first in a long-planned series. Our next chamber concert was to have been in November in Vienna, and we were looking forward to performing the Bartók concerto with the Vienna Philharmonic at the 1993 Salzburg Festival.

The loss of Gerhart Hetzel to his family and his colleagues throughout the world is devastating. His peerless musicianship and the enthusiasm he brought to all facets of his work will remain an inspiration to us all. I am proud and grateful to have known him both as an invaluable colleague and as a friend.

James Levine
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