

CHANNELS: *Dio ex Machina*

MARYA MANNES

IF THE PEOPLE who watched the labor-rackets hearings on their television sets recently went away mad, the nation will have the Dumont network to thank for it. A small minority may be mad at the wrong things, among them friends and relatives of the hoods and fixers questioned by the Senate's Select Committee to Investigate Improper Activities in Labor-Management Relations. Some members of the Teamsters and other unions involved may only harden in defiant loyalty to their bosses, immune to moral concern. There may be others, not in any way directly affected, whose chronic, if latent, hatred of unions or Jews or Italians or lawyers has been triggered off by the presence of these elements in palpably unflattering context. Still more—and these will include many good people—will have been so outraged by the misuse of the Fifth Amendment that they will question its purpose.

But if this particular viewer is in any way typical, the anger of most people will be a healthy one: an anger against the manipulation of the decent by the corrupt, at the deep fouling of American life, at the unchecked license of greed, at the travesty of law.

It did not require a knowledge of labor practices to perceive these evils. Thanks to the thorough preparation and exposition of the committee and the very able commentaries of *Look's* labor reporter Clark Mollenhoff and Matt Warren of Dumont's Washington outlet, the crux of the investigation was crystal clear. This was the tie between Jimmy Hoffa, possible future president of the giant Teamsters Union, and Johnny Dio (DioGuardi), a convicted extortioner. The details of this association are by now known to all newspaper readers. But as usual, television added another dimension to reality.

THE DOMINANT personality of the hearings was—again—Senator McClellan, the chairman of the com-

mittee. I say "again" because his impact was equally strong in the Army-McCarthy investigation of three years ago, when the features of the Senator from Arkansas impressed themselves in American memory as vividly as those of the Senator from Wisconsin, if for different reasons. Whatever one may think of McClellan's politics and prejudices, his is an American face of a type that is fast vanishing: hard, stern, completed, in a way noble. It is a face both puritan and earthy, and the voice which issues from it—slow, deep, and rasping—has the same qualities. McClellan can be both hell-fire preacher and cracker-barrel farmer, apocalyptical and homespun.

There is no question of the senator's real abhorrence of the corruption spread out before him, and when he used words like "disgraceful and shameful" and "We must liberate them [the workers] from this vise of evil," it was not a grandstand play but the voice of an older American conscience. In this he differs from Senator Kennedy, whose indignation against this evil was doubtless as sincere but whose outbursts had a scolding, pettish quality, like a housemaster admonishing unruly schoolboys.

The sight of the two brothers together, however, Robert the boyish counsel and John the boyish senator, both shock-headed, intense, tremendously able, was politically impressive. The future was stamped upon them—apparently a large one.

ON THE OTHER side of the long, curving, polished Senatorial table, across a small stretch of floor and a wide gap in civilized development, the witnesses were no less fascinating. Johnny Dio himself gives little hint of the life he lives and the power he has accrued. He has a regularity of feature that might be called handsome, a well-shaped head, and a well-curved mouth. Not even the restless intelligence of his eyes behind the horn-rimmed glasses seems particularly

malign. But on the features of the men who jump to his voice, corruption sits like a moldering mask; their mouths are tough and tight and their shoulders hunched for assault or resistance.

To many viewers their repeated taking of the Fifth Amendment—some fifty times or more—must have seemed as monotonous and wearying as it was to the committee, who at least were inured to obstruction. To this viewer, the variety with which they invoked it proved a considerable source of amusement. One monumental hood, the driver of the getaway car of the man who blinded Victor Riesel, said "on the grounds that it might intimidate me." A lot of them had trouble with the word, which came out "intimate," "incriminate," or even "uncremate." One had to refer repeatedly to a printed statement, and after every question addressed him by the committee, his fat and scowling counsel would lean toward him and say "Plead!" Mr. Dio himself read the Fifth 137 times without prompting.

I doubt, however, whether there was anything funny to most viewers about the manner in which the Fifth Amendment was resorted to, and it must have occurred to many that there must be a way in which this privilege can be confined to a clearly established line of questioning. In far too many cases it seemed to be invoked not to obtain protection but as an act of contempt.

A SENATE COMMITTEE is not a court, and the courts themselves will need time before they can deal with whatever crimes some of these men may have committed. Even then, the cancer will not be fully rooted out.

The function of televising this investigation was, as I see it, to make the disease and its enormity clearly visible, to show how it touched all parts of the nation's body, and to arouse a public to preventive action against its spread.

"Do you know," Senator McClellan would say to the racketeers with real emotion in his voice, "the harm you are doing to honest organized labor in this country?"

They did not, of course, answer. It will be interesting to see if the viewing public does.

Musical Echoes

Of the Renaissance

MARTIN MAYER

UNTIL a few decades ago, people who spoke of "early music" usually meant a body of composition primitive and overly complicated at the same time, featuring intensive counterpoint and strange harmonies, offering limited resources for emotional expression, and appealing only to an audience of specialists and scholars. One respected it, of course; one paid a certain homage to the distant names of Josquin and Lassus, Palestrina and Monteverdi; but it was student stuff, with no practical application.

Much of the music had to be reconstructed before it could be performed, and performing it required special training. The scholars who did the reconstructions and undertook to lead the performances often had no particular talent as executant musicians, and the singers who worked under their direction were almost invariably eager amateurs or conscientious undergraduates, whose vocalism was breathy and insecure and commonly off pitch. Whatever the beauties of the music, such performances could have little appeal, even for a sophisticated audience. And the absence of a considerable ticket-buying audience kept professional singers from trying their hand at the music. A vicious circle of classic dimension was in operation to restrict the enjoyment of medieval and Renaissance music to a cult of devotees.

Today the circle is broken: Professional performances of early music are accessible to all, and the audience for it is expanding. Two otherwise unrelated factors—the death of eighteenth- and nineteenth-century theories of musical composition and the growth of the phonograph record—have joined to make the revolution. Modern composers (most notably Nadia Boulanger and Paul Hindemith) went back to early music to find theoretical foundations for their own work; and the dis-

sonances of modern music made the "false relations" of early music seem less shockingly wrong to the general audience. Meanwhile, the phonograph record freed performers of early music from dependence on small local audiences, and opened up a world-wide market for first-class work.

With the expansion of the record business after the Second World War, it became conceivable that professional singers would be willing to put in the time and work necessary for specialization in Renaissance music, and that the works of Dufay and Josquin, Lassus and Monteverdi, great music by any standards and much of it wonderfully tuneful, might attract a paying audience far larger than the usual coterie.

A Pioneer

Making the most of the first of these possibilities and reaching for the second, in 1952 Noah Greenberg founded Pro Musica Antiqua of



New York, the first independent, wholly professional early-music group on this continent.

Greenberg's qualifications for this mission were unique. He had been ardently devoted to early music from his first serious study of the piano and composition in the 1930's, and from 1942 to 1949, while working as a merchant seaman, he collected rare scores and rare recordings at European ports of call and studied them through the long, solitary, undistracted leisure hours of a sailor's life.

While at sea, Greenberg was an active member of the National Maritime Union, and when he returned to his musical career he brought with him a trade-unionist's feelings about an honest day's pay for an honest day's work. "What I really wanted to do," Greenberg says, "was to get into a position where I could go to people and say to them, 'I can pay you to perform old music.'"

This ambition seemed futuristic in 1949, when Greenberg left the sea for good. A large, gentle, casual man whose suits always hang on him like sacks, he had minimal financial resources, few contacts, and none of the promotional polish usually required for launching musical institutions. His first shore job was with the International Ladies Garment Workers Union, organizing choruses among the membership. On his own time, Greenberg organized a private chorus among his friends for serious study of early music.

Toward the end of 1952 Greenberg's millennium suddenly arrived. A small record company, Esoteric Records, decided to sink its capital into a series of half a dozen first-class recordings of Renaissance music, and came to Greenberg in hopes that he could do the job cheaply, with his study group or one of his ILGWU groups. Greenberg insisted on professionals and on enough money to form a professional ensemble and to work its members into a correct Renaissance style. Shuddering at the expense, Esoteric nonetheless picked up the bills for the founding of Pro Musica.

The Musicians

The first singer Greenberg recruited was a carrot-haired, cherub-faced young tenor named Russell Oberlin who was fresh out of the Juilliard School and was singing solos at various churches and with Robert Shaw's Collegiate Chorale. Oberlin knew he was a high tenor, with a vocal compass far out of the ordinary, but the only music he had found in which he could use his extraordinary high tones was in the songs of Benjamin Britten. Greenberg, listening to him from church pews, had spotted him as that rarest of vocal talents, the countertenor, whose sweet but never cloying top tones were greatly prized and heavily