

## Opera at the Goosemarket

**KEISER:** *Overture*; "*Croesus herrsche*"; "*Prangt die allerschönste Blume*"; *Peasant Scene*; "*Ich sä auf wilde Wellen*"; "*Ihr stummen Fische seid dem gleich*"; "*Götter, übt Barmherzigkeit*" (from "*Croesus*") [*Hermann Prey* (*Croesus*), *Lisa Otto* (*Elmira*), *Manfred Schmidt* (*Orsanes*), *Theo Adam* (*Eliates*), *Karl-Ernst Mercker* (*Elcius*) and *Ursula Schirmacher* (*Peasant Girl*)]. **MATTHESON:** "*Hochbeglückte Zeiten*"; "*Empor! Empor!*"; "*Vorrei scordarmi*"; "*Schau Boris uns in Gnaden an*" (from "*Boris Goudenow*") [*Theo Adam* (*Boris*), *Manfred Schmidt* (*Irina*)]. **TELEMANN:** "*Was aber denkt ihr . . . Mein herz erfreut sich*" (from "*Pimpinone*") [*Shige Yano* (*Vespetta*) and *Herbert Bauer* (*Pimpinone*)]. **HANDEL:** *Ballet Music* (from "*Almira*"). *Berlin Philharmonic*, *Wilhelm Brückner-Rüggeberg* conducting. Angel 36273, \$4.79; stereo S 36273, \$5.79.

In 1677, an opera company was formed in and for the city of Hamburg, and by the next year it was situated in its own house by the banks of the Alster River on Gänsemarktstrasse, Goosemarket Street. For nearly six decades it flourished as "an opera theater such as at that time existed in no palace, no court, and no city in Germany." Until times and tastes changed, and until Italian opera became the vogue of the day, the Goosemarket was a showcase for many leading German composers.

The first work produced at the Goosemarket was Theile's *Adam and Eve*; or *Man Created, Fallen and Restored to Grace*. This opera was typical of the biblical themes that dominated the repertoire in the theater's early years. Gradually, however, librettos were drawn from history, classical mythology, and local subjects. The essentially popular nature of the Hamburg company was evident by the frequent use of the dialect of the region and by the appearance of market women and "dames of questionable reputation," as Bukofzer puts it, in place of castrati. Eventually the earthy but lavish (for their day) productions at the Goosemarket, with their comic intermezzos, aroused the ire of the city's Lutheran conservatives and a heated conflict raged pro and con.

Before the company failed in 1738, it had produced nearly 250 works, most of them in German. Its golden age was during the reigns of Richard Keiser as director, 1695-1706 and 1709-1717. Keiser wrote some 120 operas, and his music was lavishly praised by Handel, whose admiration must have been genuine, for he incorporated sections of Keiser's *Octavia* into operas of his own.

The excerpts from *Croesus* on this new Angel LP vividly demonstrate that Keiser wrote with a definite flair.

The opening Sinfonia and the chorus "*Croesus herrsche*" are broad, grand statements, elaborately orchestrated. The arias "*Prangt die allerschönste Blume*," for *Croesus*, and "*Ihr stummen Fische*," for *Elmira*, are, in contrast, set in the popular style of the German *Singspiel*. The five-part Peasant Scene (*Ritornello-Dance Song-Recitativo-Air* with Children's Chorus-Peasant Ballet) is music of enormous charm, and doubtless gave rise to a pastoral scene so dear to Goosemarket audiences and so repulsive to the Pietists.

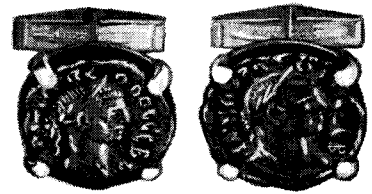
Side 2 is devoted to three other composers prominent in the history of the Hamburg theater: Mattheson, Telemann, and Handel. Mattheson is represented by four excerpts from his "dramma per musica," for which he supplied his own text, *Boris Goudenow*; or *the Throne Gained through Cunning*. This work, written in 1710, was recorded in its entirety several years ago but is no longer in the catalogue. Mattheson, a lawyer and diplomat, as well as a composer and singer, met the encroachment of Italian opera head on: he interpolated Italian arias into his German libretto.

The opening chorus is a brilliant, joyous piece of music, but of more interest is the final chorus of old men and children which corresponds, but only dramatically, with the opening chorus in Moussorgsky's *Boris*, where the people beg Boris to accept the throne. The brief duet from Telemann's *Pimpinone*, a comic opera that anticipates Pergolesi's *La serva padrona* by eight years, is the least engaging item on the record.

The ballet music (*Courante-Bourée-Menuet-Rigaudon-Rondeau-Chaconne-Saraband*) from Handel's *A Change in Fortunes Gained through a Crown*; or *Almira, Queen of Castile* concludes the disc. Written in 1706 when Handel was twenty-one, *Almira* was so successful at the Goosemarket that it threatened Keiser's supremacy as reigning composer of the theater. He answered the challenge by writing an *Almira* of his own. Handel's music for the ballet sequence, with the notable exception of the stately, beautiful concluding *Sarabande* (which later became "*Lascia, ch'io pianga*" in his opera *Rinaldo*), is not particularly distinguished, however.

The performances range from only acceptable (in the case of the two artists in the Telemann duet) to superb (*Hermann Prey* in the *Croesus* arias). The orchestra's playing throughout is excellent, and much of the enjoyment of the record comes from the flowing tempos of Brückner-Rüggeberg.—JOHN ARDOIN.

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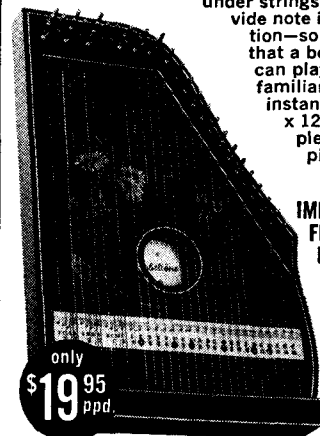
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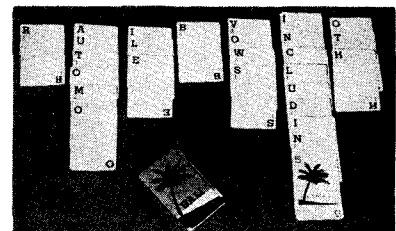


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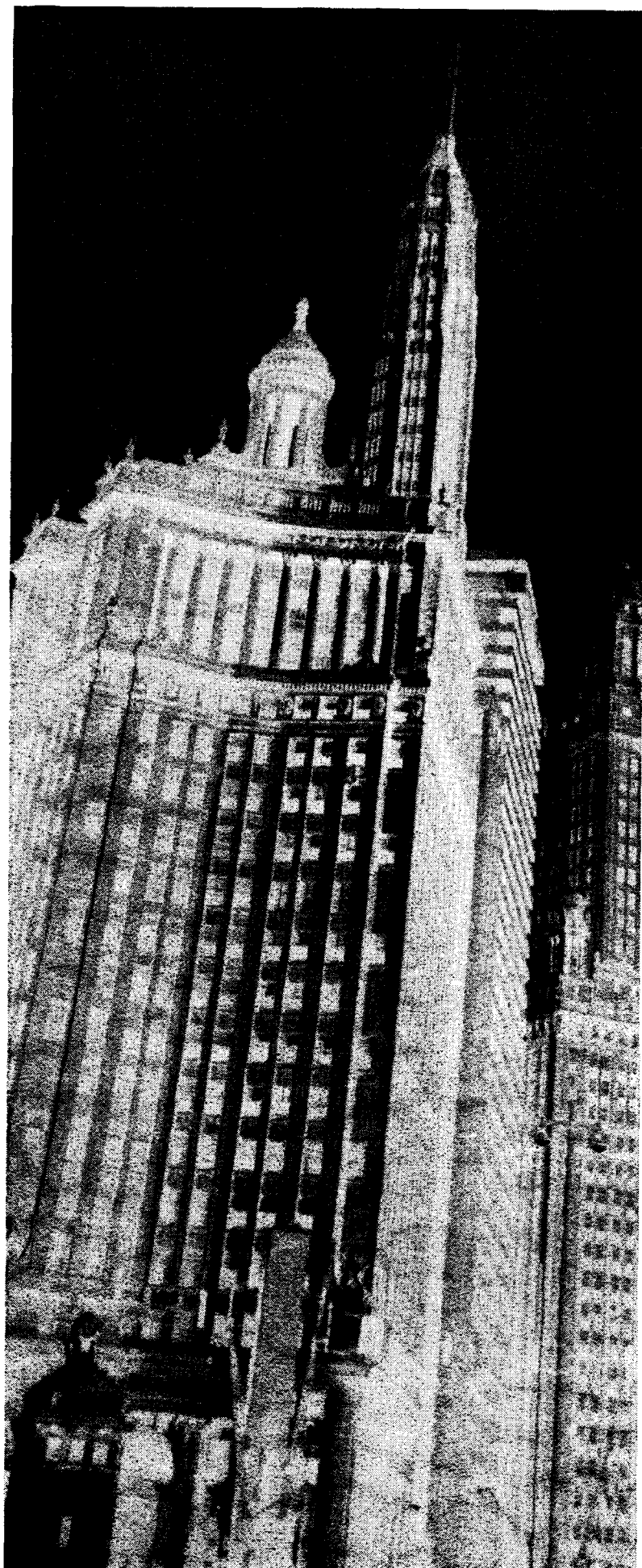
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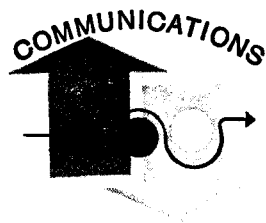
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# COMMUNICATIONS

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## *Xerox Proves a Point*

**I**N MAY 1964 we reported to our readers the difficulties Xerox Corporation was getting into following an announcement that it would produce and sponsor a series of television specials on the United Nations. It all began quietly enough a couple of years ago when Xerox decided to underwrite a series of hour-and-a-half filmed fiction shows designed to acquaint the American people more fully with the United Nations, its potential, its myriad activities, and its amazing accomplishments for a world organization so young. Xerox put more than \$4,000,000 behind the series because, as C. Joseph Wilson, president of Xerox, put it: "How ridiculous it would be for us to build a showroom in New York without simultaneously trying to build a peaceful world." Mr. Wilson called Xerox's move "an innovative business proposition," adding: "As you look at the kind of long-range public relations values which we are seeking, these programs will prove, in five years or ten, to have been very, very good investments indeed."

Recently Elmo Roper and Associates has published in its privately distributed marketing and public opinion letter, "The Public Pulse," an extremely interesting report on how Xerox has made out with its expensive U.N. film drama experiment. The Roper article tries to answer such questions as: How much harm does a corporation suffer when it puts on a TV series that becomes the center of political controversy? How destructive to a company is a letter-writing and publicity campaign organized by a group that opposes the whole premise of the program? How representative of public opinion at large are the letters of protest?

Here is what the Roper follow-through found out: After a quiet start, in which Xerox made an initial decision that it would have only opening and closing institutional credit in each ninety-minute TV film, a tidal wave of letters suddenly struck the corporation one hundred to one against the forthcoming TV series. This sudden flood of protest mail was, of course, no chance item but stemmed directly from a bulletin of the John Birch Society which called its members' attention to Xerox's plans, commenting: "We hate to see a corporation of this country promote the U.N. when we know that it is an instrument of the Soviet Communist conspiracy." The John Birch bulletin suggested that "an avalanche of mail ought to convince [Xerox] of the un wisdom of their proposed action from a strictly business point of view." The Birch bulletin did suggest, however, that its readers refrain from threatening a boycott of Xerox products, an illegal and punishable act.

Now, a \$300,000,000-a-year-business must react in some way to 61,000 letters written to its top executives in the course of a few months, particularly when every one of these 61,000 letters threatens to destroy the company and all its works. It would be absurd to say that the Xerox management was not affected in some manner by the organized opposition to its proposed U.N. programs. Yet an analysis of the mail quickly showed that the 61,000 letters were written by about 16,000 people and that many of the letters were practically identical. When these funny coincidences were added up, Xerox's decision to stand by its original plans became a lot easier,

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