

Music to My Ears

Irving Kolodin

Mozart's "Tito" at the Juilliard

ALTHOUGH ITS CHARTER is primarily to educate the young, The Juilliard School now and then extends its franchise to graduates, postgraduates, and even non-graduates in need of the kind of illumination it dispenses. The latest in a long sequence of such services was a production of Mozart's all but legendary *La Clemenza di Tito* in the attractive Juilliard Theater, with Bruno Maderna conducting a production designed by John Scheffler and directed by Osvaldo Riosfrancos for the American Opera Center (a Juilliard subsidiary).

This is the work composed by Mozart in 1791 for a September ceremonial in Prague on behalf of the newly crowned Leopold II. It is, thus, a work even later in his eventful, soon-to-end life than the perennially performed *Magic Flute*. Were chronological "fulfillment" the issue, it should be one of the most cherished of all his stage works. That it is not—and a professional production in New York eludes recollection—argues one of two possibilities. One might be the breakdown of the otherwise incredible faculties that continued to be productive up to the *Requiem* he was striving to finish when he died in December 1791, or some other inhibiting factor. A breakdown of any sort *Tito* clearly is not. The two acts are packed with music of a beauty available only to one mind of all the minds that ever existed, and the quality mounts as the evening progresses. But an inhibiting factor? That is something else. To suit the ceremonial surroundings, *La Clemenza di Tito* was conceived in the manner of an *opera seria*. Admirers of that now archaic genre contend that *Tito* is by no means typical of it. But it abides by enough of its conventions, including the description of all the action in the plot rather than the depiction of it, to suffer its disadvantages.

Even more, the plot itself is both lame and halt, concerning as it does the Emperor Titus, who usurped the throne of the Emperor Vitellius and frustrated the hopes of his daughter Vitellia to become "Augusta" (Empress). When she hears that Tito proposes to make Servilia his queen, she prompts her lover (nothing like having an obedient one in reserve) to assassinate the monarch. But Servilia engages the best in Tito by admitting, candidly,

that she loves another, and he decides that his choice, after all, should be Vitellia. This, needless to say, makes for a certain amount of embarrassment all the way around, as the plot proceeds in ignorance of his altered intentions. Then it is Tito's decision to have the unsuccessful assassin (though otherwise his best friend Sesto) torn limb from limb by animals kept hungry for the purpose. But Vitellia comes forward to confess that it was all her idea, and the clement Tito forgives all, on behalf of the greater good of Rome and to the cheers of the populace. The only thing unresolved at the end is the same thing unresolved at the beginning: namely, whom is Tito going to make his Empress?

The only purpose in reciting this elliptical tale is to set forth the elliptical problem with which Mozart was faced. Had there been emotion, drama, some uncertainty or suspense at issue, it is a reasonable possibility that Mozart's sense of the theater would have been engaged and the product would have been worthy of his genius. But, being a reasonable man as well as a genius, there was nothing he could do with a foregone conclusion—other than write the most beautiful music he could and hope for the best.

This, assuredly, he did, and some of it rivals in ingenuity and skill anything associated with his name. But it differs from the music of *The Magic Flute*, *Don Giovanni*, *Figaro*, and even *Costa fan tutte* in one vital respect. Whereas those great operas contained situations that gripped his heart and caused him to pour blood into the music he wrote, *Tito* involved only his mind and the thought of which it was capable. Beautifully formulated, marvelously constructed, enormously well ordered as it is, the product is lacking in the seductive power that makes a participant of a listener.

For its educational purposes, the Juilliard was well served by the handsomely symmetrical setting of open arches and columns that Scheffler had grouped in the manner of a peristyle and the stylized, carefully disciplined mummery that Riosfrancos arranged within it. This may not be everybody's idea of how the "dramatic" problem of *Tito* can best be served, but it did, at least, afford the performers useful in-

doctrination in such postures and attitudes. Unlike the productions seen last year, this one advanced the dramatic interests of the performers rather than deterred them.

In an effort to produce a more interesting outcome, Maderna interpolated a concert aria by Mozart into each of the two acts. The procedure did not add much to theatrical interest, but did subtract from authenticity. Of the two casts, the one of the opening performance reflected the greatest credit on Jacquelyn Benson (the Marzelline of Leonard Bernstein's TV *Fidelio* of last year). She has considerable stage talent and an attractive voice, neither disadvantaged by the requirements of her role of Servilia. Also suitably endowed for what she had to do was Barrie Smith as Annio. But all the others, beginning with bass David Wilder as Publio and moving upward to Leonard Johnson, who made a valiant effort to produce the florid tenor sound required for Tito; Ellen Shade, who not only had difficult music to sing as Sesto, but also was playing a male role written for a castrato; and especially Sung Sook Lee as Vitellia, were lacking in vocal discipline on the scale Mozart's writing demands. On the other hand, the members of the student orchestra, including the soloists who performed the difficult obbligatos for clarinet, oboe, and bass horn (the bass clarinetish instrument with which Mozart embellished the famous "Non più di fiori") gave Maderna everything his sound, patient direction deserved. A certain lack of fervor was a by-product of the good conferred by the patience.

It was, in several other respects, a week crowded with vocal happenings, some of them as memorable as Dietrich Fischer-Dieskau's superb singing in Carnegie Hall of a choice selection of Hugo Wolf's Mörike songs to the faultless piano playing of Daniel Barenboim and others as depressingly wide of the mark as Hildegard Hillebrecht's provincial kind of Leonore as Beethoven's *Fidelio* entered the meat-grinder phase of the Metropolitan's repertory (William Dooley as Pizarro struck these eyes, at least, as remarkably reminiscent of a certain contemporary conductor born in Salzburg). Among the more ambitious was a concert version of Handel's *Orlando* in Carnegie Hall, for which conductor Stephen Simon lacked the attributes for indoctrinating such singers as Rosalind Elias (Orlando), Betty Allen (Medoro), and Justino Díaz (Zoroastro) in a style of florid vocalization foreign to them. Marilyn Horne's first Rosina in Rossini's *Barbiere* at the Metropolitan will be reported upon next time.



Continued from page 16

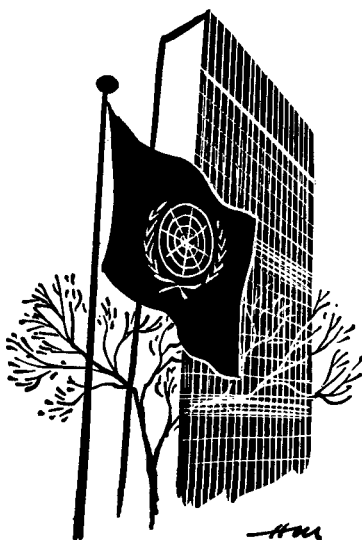
world law. But, as Carlos Romulo pointed out, they are the irreducible minimum if the U.N. is to have even a reasonable chance of doing its job.

The resolution supported by the eight governments did not call for Charter review. But at least the resolution has started the process; it requires that the Secretary General invite the member governments to furnish him, before July 1, 1972, with specific views and suggestions on reviewing and reforming the Charter.

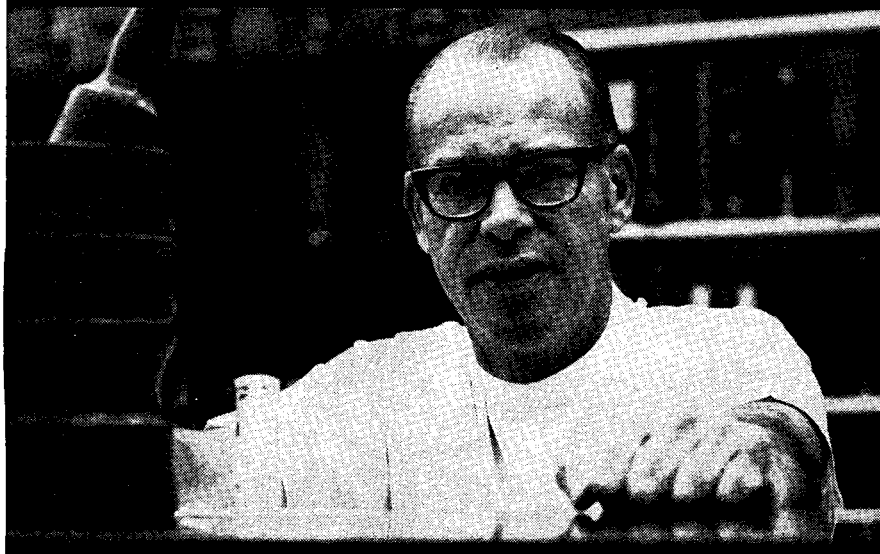
In this form, the resolution passed the General Assembly by a vote of 82 to 12. At first, the United States was opposed to any resolution leading to Charter review but, to its credit, joined the large majority when the vote was called.

It may be said that the resolution was so perfunctory that opponents to Charter review could vote for it in complete confidence that it would never come about. Not necessarily so. The great gain achieved by passage of the resolution is that it now provides world public opinion with a place to take hold. If enough people become sufficiently animated about the need to strengthen the U.N., they now have a track on which they can move. In the United States, public opinion is in a position to get the government to take the question seriously. Several men whose names have been mentioned for Presidential nomination have already identified themselves with the call for a stronger U.N. They can be encouraged to make world law through the U.N. a campaign issue in 1972.

One way or another, an opportunity for improving the U.N. now exists. Individual citizens keep asking what they can do; they now have at least one possible answer. —N. C.



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*Another point of view ...
Pharmaceutical Manufacturers Association, 1155 15th St.,
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*American Druggist Survey, 1969

Booked for Travel

David Butwin

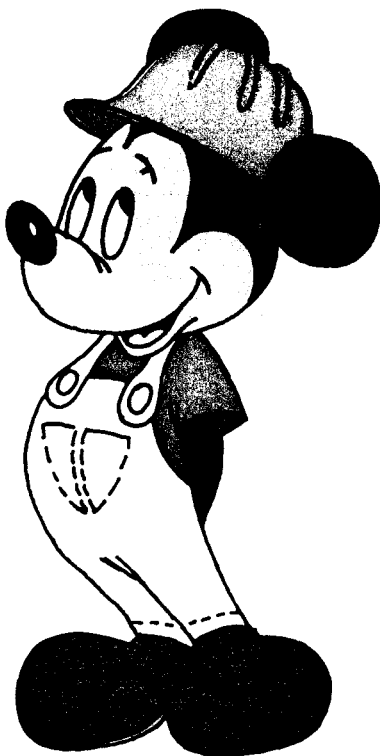
Whistle While You Work

MICKEY MOUSE lives. He is in temporary residence in central Florida wearing a hard hat and inspiring the construction of Walt Disney World, an enterprise he hopes will combine the best qualities of Utopia and Toyland. I didn't see Mickey on a recent expedition to the pine barrens and orange groves around Orlando, where the updated Disneyland is being built, but I could feel his nearness.

Mickey says the Magic Kingdom park, with its dreamy renditions of moated castles, Wild West saloons, jungle cruises, and a lot of playthings new to Disney followers, will open on schedule in October. Who is to doubt it? The original Disneyland opened in Anaheim, California, on July 17, 1955, precisely on time, just a year after groundbreaking. The Orlando branch will have taken longer to build, but, then, it hopes to accomplish much more. Disney publicity releases call it the largest non-governmental project presently under construction in the country. The whole of California's Disneyland occupies 350 acres; Disney World has 27,000 acres to work with. More than just an amusement center, it eventually will include five hotels, two golf courses, beaches, campgrounds, a 7,500-acre nature preserve, and, if signs are encouraging, a model community of 20,000 residents whose lives will be blessed with all the futuristic conveniences the Disney labs can dream up.

Until Disney World started rising, Orlando was better known as a gateway to other places. About a third of the nation's citrus fruit is grown in a sandy belt across central Florida, and three-fourths of the phosphate is mined in nearby Polk County. Orlando does attract droves of retired couples and wintering Northerners, who can strike out on day trips to Cape Kennedy, Cypress Gardens, Daytona Beach, and dozens of lakes with such seductive names as Kissimmee and June in Winter.

One of Orlando's biggest employers, the Martin Marietta Corporation, builders of aircraft and missile parts, was dealt a blow by the cutback in space-industry funds, but Disney World saved some of the jobs when it got Martin Marietta to build its monorail cars. "Our best surveys show that in the next ten years Disney World will produce a hundred thousand jobs in



central Florida," Dick Nunis, director of operations and wearer of a Mickey Mouse watch, told me one clear Orlando night.

Skeptics have questioned the locale of the second superpark ever since Disney himself, who died five years ago, handpicked the new site. Central Florida was held by some to be too rainy and cold in the winter and too steamy in the summer, but the planners studied the climate, found the reports exaggerated, and announced the purchase in 1965. For good measure, they sketched into the plans extra shelter and air conditioning. It was also felt that with the expansion of the two freeways that crisscross near Orlando, the great motoring public who make up most of the prospective clientele would happily point their cars toward central Florida.

"When the first Disneyland more or less 'arrived,' Walt started getting bids to build new parks all over the world," Nunis said. "Paris, London, some place in Africa, of course Arizona, and other parts of the States. We never really thought of going overseas. We've got a lot of land at home."

Disney minds wondered at first if the East Coast would go for the same attractions that have sent Westerners flocking to Anaheim. "In California, we get ten million out-of-staters a year,

but only a tiny percentage come from east of the Mississippi," Nunis said. "We did a couple of shows at the 1964 World's Fair in New York to see if East and West are really different. Of course, we found that people are people."

There will, however, be differences between the two playgrounds. Out West the Pirates of the Caribbean exhibit intrigues audiences who normally don't get near the Caribbean. In Florida, where pirates are part of the lore, the act will be replaced by Frontier Land. One of the few complaints registered against Disneyland is the long wait at some of the main attractions. "The Matterhorn is the longest wait in the West," another Disney man told me. "Here, we're going to have a modern-type Space Mountain that will handle four times the capacity of the Matterhorn."

Probably the most significant difference will be the length of stay and diversity of events programed for Orlando visitors. Disneyland was designed to fetch customers for six or seven hours, then send them wheeling down the freeways to other California shrines. Disney World hopes to keep families and conventioners (the hotels will be fitted with huge meeting halls) for several days with the added appeal of camping sites, riding stables, nature hikes, water-skiing, and nearly every other outdoor pursuit except possum hunting.

No doubt opossums still roam the grounds today. Deer, alligators, snakes, dozens of varieties of water birds, and even armadillos have been spotted by an admittedly wary Disney staff. Armadillos? These horny creatures are native to Latin America and Texas, but their numbers have been growing in central Florida ever since a pair escaped from a visiting circus. It is guaranteed that water moccasins, alligators, and other of the less accommodating residents will be cleared out or at least hied away to the game refuge by opening day. The local mosquitoes, a hungry breed, have been combated with spraying and fogging actions. "Mainly we just have to keep the water flowing in our two lakes," Nunis said. "And believe me, we've looked into the matter. We have a book *that* thick on insect control."

Most of the creators of Disneyland have been transferred to Orlando to work their magic on the burgeoning settlement. Bill Evans, mustachioed and movie-star handsome, the man whose landscaping techniques separate Disneyland from all other amusement parks, is testing more than a hundred types of trees and plants, including a couple of California redwoods, in the loamy soil. His admiring