

## 'The Bartered Bride'

The Metropolitan Opera's new production of Smetana's "The Bartered Bride" is a romp, not in the elaborate Rossinian sense — its sets are too simple, its crowds too static — but along more solid Slavic lines.

Its performance at Wolf Trap on Saturday was a delightful end to the Met's run there. It had all the ingredients of comic opera raised to high art: superb singing, convincing acting, marvelous choreography well danced, and, above all, masterful musical leadership.

In the role of Marenka — who is in love with Jemik but promised by contract to Vasek — Patricia Craig sang with a voice that is clearly in superb condition. Most of her music lies in a comfortable middle range, but on the few occasions when the top was challenged, she met the challenge gloriously with a floating lightness that belied the difficulties.

Nicolai Gedda as the clever Jemik who waits until the last minute to claim his love, was a smooth and likable fellow. And Jon Vickers, the stuttering, stumbling oaf that Marenka is promised to, managed to mix a real dignity into the seams of his able comic routine.

The finest acting was provided by Ara Berberian as Kecel, the marriage broker.

The real character of the production, however, resided in the choreography of Pavel Smok. The Act II fight and Act III carnival scenes were inspired moments that combined clowning, tension, grace, and a peasant coarseness into a most subtle blend. The life and vitality projected in these scenes only emphasized the lack of these same qualities in the chorus, both vocally and visually.

James Levine, who is as exciting to watch as he is to listen to, conducted with enormous energy and conviction.

—Joan Reinthaler

## Grover Washington Jr.

In the music trade publications there are some current catchwords that play an important role in the marketing of jazz-derived forms of popular music: "crossover," "fusion," and the ubiquitous adjective, "accessible."

Each of these terms implies jazz content but the sounds produced Saturday night in Constitution Hall by saxophonist Grover Washington Jr. and his sextet bore only minimal relation to that idiom.

Washington claims the late John Cotrone as a major influence but the best that can be said for his set was that it inspired movement among some members of the audience in the half-empty hall. Otherwise, sonic overkill and a relentlessly mechanical beat obscured musicianship and nullified the expression of ideas.

In contrast, Terry Callier, a tal-

ented native Washingtonian opened the evening with a diverse collection of songs that spoke to his audience. His materials ranged from the gentle ballad "Butterfly" ("This may be my favorite song," he said) to a rousing invocation to the memory of Martin Luther King.

—W. Royal Stokes

## 'Don Carlo'

Verdi's "Don Carlo" is one of his great operas but it is also one of the most difficult to present convincingly unless you have six outstanding Verdi singers in the cast.

On Friday night at Wolf Trap not much happened until shortly after 10 o'clock, although the curtain had gone up at 8. The problem centered around the fact that the powerful cast that sang in the Metropolitan's revival of the opera during the past season was not on hand. And this year for the first time, the Met is giving the complete opera much as Verdi wrote it for the Paris Opera.

In that version, Elizabeth and Don Carlo meet in the forest of Fontainebleau, believe they are to be married, and then find out that instead Elizabeth must marry Carlo's father, old King Philip II of Spain.

From there on, tragedy, compounded by the Spanish persecution of heretics at home and the Flemish in the Netherlands, gives Verdi scope for some great writing. His scorn for organized religion, personified by the Grand Inquisitor, never reached more open heights.

Unfortunately, neither Gilda Cruz-Romo's Elizabeth nor Vasile Moldoveanu's Carlo had the vocal resources to ignite the fires Verdi prepared. Thus restricted by his singers, James Levine could not do much in the pit until stronger artists appeared.

This did not happen until the Princess Eboli, Carlo, and his friend Rodrigo met in a garden and found themselves in a grand Verdian trio brought about through mistaken identities. Ryan Edwards, though his baritone is a bit light for Rodrigo, is a superb singer and artist. Nadine Denize, though she had just previously messed up Eboli's Veil Song, can sing very loudly. Something in her voice brought out a warmer response from Moldoveanu. None of it was great, but it was a start.

There followed the opera's largest scene, the burning at the stake of a bunch of heretics, of whom only two appeared. One of Verdi's exciting crowd scenes, it carried things to a somewhat higher level.

The truly great singing of the evening came from Jerome Hines as King Philip. With every bit of vocal authority and skill, he moved through the famous "Ella giammai m'amo" aria in a way that brought appropriate thundering cheers from the big audience.

That was followed by the tremendous dialogue with the Grand Inquisitor. James Morris, though lacking the

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huge black voice needed for the part, was immensely impressive, and with Hines, made the scene the finest of the evening. John Cheek was an excellent friar.

Denize had all kinds of trouble with her big scene "O don fatale," and Cruz-Romo did little with the aria in the last act. It was not a very good night, with the orchestra giving some sloppy intonation, not for the first time in the week. The chorus, in its varied assignments, was first-rate.

—Paul Hume

## Beethoven Pops

Yesterday's Beethoven Pops Concert in the Ballroom of the Capital Hilton Hotel was called a Salute to the Navy. And sure enough, there were sea chanteys sung by baritone Robert Patton. And fife and drum music played by the Patuxent Martial Music, Explorer Troop 81.

There was even a march by former Navy Secretary J. William Middledorf II. Aptly named "Old Ironsides," it was to have been conducted by Middledorf. But some demands, perhaps business, social or political, kept the composer away. And so master of ceremonies Jackson Bain, asking only, "What'd he do, run out of gas?" took on the conducting assignment himself and managed very well.

Usually there is standing room only at these Beethoven Pops. Yesterday probably because of the gas shortages, there were only a couple of hundred happy listeners. They heard Richard Weilenmann conduct a 40-piece orchestra, largely of National Symphony players, in a Mendelssohn overture. Donald Shore played the solo role in the Mozart bassoon concerto and showed why, at 17, he is headed for study at the Peabody Conservatory.

Rossini's "William Tell" Overture came complete with a squad of Swiss patriots, one of whom, in true historic manner, fired an arrow from a crossbow and landed it straight through a rather small apple perched on the head of a brave young boy standing halfway across the ballroom. You never know what you may run into at a Beethoven Pops. Or who won't get there to conduct his own music.

—Paul Hume

## Chilean Theater

The audience, mostly Spanish-speaking, jumped to its feet with loud applause and cheers Saturday night in the Terrace Theater at the conclusion of the Chilean play "How Many Years In A Day . . ." (that takes some funny and not-so-subtle jabs at the nation's dictatorial military regime).

The play—performed in Spanish by

Grupo Ictus, a professional theater group from Santiago, as part of the Kennedy Center's Theatre in the Americas Festival, which concludes tonight—concerns the difficulties seven television reporters face in carrying on their profession in today's Chile. They reflect on a variety of subjects including the transient nature of governments in Latin America.

The setting is a broadcast studio where six of the seven are gathered to tape an annual discussion program. The absent journalist, Anna Maria Montoya, apparently has been fired for political reasons. The others are summoned to the front office during the taping and chastized for their long hair and shoddy appearance and for swearing that has caught the attention of the "Internal Health Committee."

A petition defending Montoya is circulated containing the reference to "human rights," a politically sensitive subject for a government accused of repression. Should it be signed? Should the others resign? Should the taping go on?

One reluctant signer proceeds to cross out all the sensitive words in the petition and ends up only with a greeting and the signatures themselves.

The play concludes with expressions of hope for Chile's future and the reporters' decision to continue doing what they can for that future in spite of the difficulties of the present.

Certainly it is these sentiments that brought the crowd to its feet. The play, as a vehicle for these sentiments however, is weak. It is more a series of debates between stick figures, and there is only a hint of the human suffering that oppression brings.

"How Many Years" was "collectively" written (four credits) and directed (three credits). Generally, it was well acted, particularly in the comic exchanges, though occasionally a performer smirked gleefully out of character when a barb at the expense of the government drew a loud laugh from the audience. "How Many Years" was to be repeated twice yesterday.

—James T. Yenckel

## The Stuttgart Ballet

The Stuttgart Ballet concluded its Washington season this weekend with a flourish of fine performances: a final production of John Neumeier's evening-length "Lady of the Camellias" on Saturday's matinee; that evening a mixed program of shorter, non-narrative works ("Concerto for Flute and Harp," "Return to the Strange Land," and "Initials R.B.M.E.") and, on Sunday, two performances of "Eu-

gene Onegin," substituted by reason of popularity for additional scheduled performances of "Camellias."

Everybody loves an unhappy love story, and the Stuttgart specializes in unhappy love stories—which may be why so many people love the Stuttgart. The company's famous narrative ballets are, in their own ways, as formulaic as the old-time classics they update. Both "Onegin" and "Lady of the Camellias" are built around a series of pas de deux, each centered at a different phase in the developing (or languishing) romance with elaborated social dances for the corps ebbing and surging smoothly, and more-or-less naturally, around these dramatic denouements.

Onegin remains the classical, and most successful example of the type. My quarrel with "Camellias" is that there's either too little choreography (as in Marguerite's interview with Armand's father where one somehow expects the dancers to break into song) or else much too much choreography with a capital "C": too many swooning overhead lifts or passages with the women arched over backward and men's noses buried between their bosoms in what, by the end, becomes almost a parody of lechery.

In "Camellias," and in the three abstract ballets performed Saturday evening, the Stuttgart has a tendency to handle women like mermaids who have to be carried because they can't walk.

Paradoxically, this tendency, carried to an extreme in Jiri Kylian's "Return to the Strange Land," was effective perhaps because the ballet consists of little else and because, here, the device becomes a metaphor for death—the supple, pliant women communicating a kind of final yielding up of the will as they are carried from one phase of life to another.

Jean Allenby and Kurt Speker in the first duet and Susanne Hanke and Christopher Boatwright in the second moved through their ritual involutions with smooth-flowing tension.

Whatever one's misgivings about "Camellias," Marcia Haydee danced Marguerite Saturday afternoon with enough passion and phthisic frailty to assure full-catharsis for all assembled and present for the final act. The performance took off somewhere in the middle of Act II and never touched ground again. With Haydee, with her odd expressive face and appealing, angular manner, you always feel there's a genuine person up there dancing, and not just a China doll. Egon Madsen was a passionate-enough Armand to set what must surely be the Egon Madsen fan-club raving afterwards—though I thought the betrayal scene a trifle overblown. As a weary Manon Lescaut in the last act of "Camellias" and as the pale and bookish Tatiana transformed by awakening sexual passion in the dream sequence of "Onegin" at the Sunday matinee, Lucia Montagnon was light

and supple, dancing with a pure musical fluency, and with that extra throw-away quality that makes a performance memorable.

—Jean Nordhaus

## Margaret Mills

Piano students only dream of the sort of facility that seems to come so easily to Margaret Mills. She is a pupil of Eugene List, and in a nicely structured program at the National Gallery last night, she gave an impressive display of pianism.

Five of Rachmaninov's preludes and the five Chabrier "Pieces Pittoresques" made the strongest statements. The essence of both of these sets lies in solving their technical problems. What is happening is happening out front, and a strong musical pianist can reveal it.

The opening prelude and fugue by Roussel and an early sonata by Mehul were played cleanly and with dispatch.

Much the same could be said about her performance of the Beethoven Sonata, Opus 109. This music, however, requires a poetic imagination over and above all the rest, and this does not appear to be Mills' strong point. The music sounded merely matter-of-fact rather than important, as it undoubtedly is.

—Joan Reinthaler

## Ritenour at the Bayou

It's tempting to use the vague and tired terms "crossover" and "fusion" in describing the music of Lee Ritenour and Friendship. As highly respected musicians, Friendship has little trouble moving in jazz and rock circles but their performance at the Bayou last night could not be easily pigeonholed.

The most striking thing that sets Friendship apart from fusion is the work of jazz veteran Ernie Watts on soprano and tenor sax. Particularly on soprano sax—the most temperamental of reeds—Watts' strident sound cut across the keyboard and guitar lines preventing their electronics from becoming too glossy. Abe Laboriel on bass and Alex Acuna on drums anchored the band in a funky mode throughout the evening but left Ritenour plenty of slack for tasteful guitar flights that were modest in duration.

In fact, it is restraint that is one of Friendship's most conspicuous virtues. Despite the changes in tempo, Ritenour doesn't embark on any cosmic journeys and the band never tries to outfunk Funkadelic.

Considering the individual talents that make up Friendship, it is doubtful that the band will be around for long. Perhaps a recording session scheduled for later this month will prolong their life. Fusion could use the new blood.

—Mike Joyce

MOVIE RATING SYMBOLS

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THEATRE'S MOVIE RATING SYMBOLS

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