



TPO offers a celebration of sound

Mozart. 1791-1991

by Stanley Feldman

Toronto Philharmonic Orchestra with Claudio Scimone and Paul Badura-Skoda, Massey Hall

On Sunday, Feb. 17, the Toronto Philharmonic Orchestra, coming to its unique series of star-studded concerts, with an all-Mozart performance, featuring guest conductor Claudio Scimone and pianist Paul Badura-Skoda.

This concert signified the beginning of the TPO's commemorations to mark the 200th anniversary of the death of Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart, who died on Dec. 5, 1791, at age 35.

Without question Mozart was one of the greatest composers who ever lived, and possibly the most universally beloved. His music is a combination of divine inspiration and the human condition.

Both his life and his death are the subject of a new and fascinating book by Ian Haydon, 1991 recipient of the Mozart Prize, published

throughout the world as never before.

The "Overture to *Così fan tutte* K588" opened the concert. Composed during the year before he died, this opera, literally translated as "So Do They All" or "Women Are Like That" is one of Mozart's most sophisticated and controversial; the story revolving as it does, about the unfaithfulness of women led into temptation.

The overture sets the stage for an exciting play, and hints at the many passages of exquisite music to come.

Under the magical stage-presence of Maestro Scimone, the TPO responded with vigour and precision, its clarity amplified by the wonderful Massey Hall acoustics.

Claudio Scimone founded the famed Italian string orchestra, "I Solisti Veneti," in 1959, and is still their music director. He has led the group to concerts in over 50 countries, and has made more than 100 recordings featuring some of the world's greatest soloists. His stage presence, smiling countenance, body movements and unique conducting style not only resulted in aural pleasure, but a delightful visual experience.

The feature piece of the evening,

the Piano Concerto No.22 in E flat major, K482, introduced the audience to Paul Badura-Skoda, world renowned pianist from Vienna, who came to prominence in 1947, and who has, among many other musical achievements, collaborated with his wife Dr. Eva Badura-Skoda in writing the acclaimed book "Interpreting Mozart on the Keyboard."

This concerto was composed in Vienna in Dec. 1785, while Mozart also worked on the "Marriage of Figaro." It was during this period that Mozart discovered the wonders of the clarinet, and this was his first concerto to use this instrument in the orchestra.

From the majestic opening allegro to the reflective andante, Mr. Badura-Skoda played effectively and with total confidence. The final movement begins in a lively manner, but suddenly is interrupted by an andantino cantabile, full of romantically emotional music. The cadenzas in this performance were written by the soloist Skoda, and at the end of the Concerto, he was greeted with enthusiastic applause, to which he responded with an equally enthusiastic "encore."

After the interval, the concert pro-

ceeded with the Symphony No.39 in E flat Major, K543, this piece, together with Symphonies No. 40 and 41 were Mozart's last three. They were all written in the summer of 1788 and without commissions, which was all the more surprising because Mozart was in great financial difficulty (a constant in his short life).

It has been said that this trio of symphonies were among the greatest orchestral compositions of the 18th Century. As with the Piano Concerto No.22, played earlier, the Symphony No.39 shows Mozart's new-found interest in the clarinet consistently exposed.

The symphony is constructed in four movements: adagio (allegro), andante con moto, menuetto (allegretto) and the finale (allegro), the whole an exciting combination of majesty and mystery, reflecting the mature Mozart.

Claudio Scimone, conducting without a score, brought out the best in the TPO (minor criticism about the precision of the wind section), all combining to produce a memorable performance. Another "encore" piece was needed before the audience was prepared to let them go. Good stuff!

King Ralph equals tiresome jokes and stale cliches

By David Weissman

King Ralph

Universal Pictures

Directed by David S. Ward

For anyone who has ever unlimbered their wallet and shelled out the better part of twenty dollars for a night at the movies, *King Ralph* presents a golden opportunity to save some money.

Although at times *King Ralph* can be good, harmless fun, it offers nothing new about the complexities of transforming an unrefined commoner into the role model for an entire country; content instead with slapstick pranks and cardboard characters to move the story forward.

The film opens with the royal family gathering atop a platform for a family photograph. The platform and electrical wiring are wet following a rainstorm however, and when the photographer snaps his camera the entire royal family is wiped out in a freak accident.

Ralph Jones (played by John Goodman) is the fired Las Vegas lounge pianist who is eventually identified as the sole heir to the throne of England.

Once Ralph arrives in England, the film quickly degenerates into a parade of stale cliches about the clash of American and British cultures; a joke tiresome enough to make one seriously consider sneaking out and watching the film in the adjoining theatre.



King Ralph (Goodman) enjoys some soap suds mixed with beer suds in his over-sized bathroom. Unfortunately Ralph has the last laugh because this

movie is a stinker. Perhaps if the audience could watch this cliché-ridden film from their own bathrooms, they would share the humour. Doubt it.

See the uncultured American bowling in the royal palace. See him ordering food at a Burger King restaurant (bad pun intended). See him playing a rowdy Jerry Lee Lewis number on the harpsichord at a royal banquet, and so on.

Peter O'Toole's performance as Willingham (Ralph's confidant and private secretary) is the unfortunate casualty of a thin script by the usually talented David S. Ward (*The Sting*, *Major League*). Willingham's actions encompass every servant

who ever lived; only when he challenges an angry and disgusted Ralph to face the difficulties of being king does his character begin to come alive.

The movie does have some redeeming qualities, however.

Namely, the repeated suggestion that being the king of England is not all it's cracked up to be. But even this idea is not explored much beyond the usual complaints about restrictions on personal freedom; particularly the warning that Ralph must break off his relationship with commoner Miranda Green, a former stripper with whom he has fallen in love.

Meanwhile, the devious Lord Greaves (John Hurt) is plotting to disgrace Ralph by exposing his relationship with Miranda with some incriminating photos for the British tabloids. During this time Ralph's unconventional style charms an African head of state and offends a European king, causing Britain to lose an important manufacturing contract.

Ralph perseveres, however, and in the end he retains his dignity by passing the crown to his servant Willingham (who turns out to be a secret heir after all), and exposing the evil plot of Lord Greaves in front of the entire British parliament. With his return to civilian life complete, Ralph and Miranda reconcile for a new beginning and a second chance at love. Sound familiar?

Combine all the above with the rising cost of theatre admission and you're left with a movie that is better suited to a dusty corner of a video store near you.



John Goodman stars as Ralph Jones, an American piano player from Las Vegas who becomes King of England.

**GRE
LSAT
GMAT**
Prep courses

Mar 16 GMAT
June LSAT
June 1 GRE

For information about one and two weekend courses:
**(416) 923-PREP
1-800-387-5519**

We offer courses in Toronto, London, Ottawa and Montreal

Crystal Court
FINE CHINESE & SZECHUAN CUISINE
Fully Licensed
1300 Finch Avenue West, Downsview, Ontario M3J 3K2 (Keele/Finch)

合時火鍋上市
晚飯奉送特別靚湯

- *Dining Lounge
- *Business Luncheon Special
- *Take Out or Delivery
- *Special Occasion Party & Birthday Party

無任歡迎
堂食外賣
炒粉麵飯
煲仔麵飯
名菜燒臘
粵菜小炒

Business Hours
Mon-Thurs 11:30 am - 12 Midnight
Fri-Sat 11:30 am - 1:00 am
Sun.-Holiday 12:00 noon - 11:00 pm

(Delivery start at 11:30a.m.)
739-6600

ORDER FROM

**TASTY
Pizza & MORE**

Super Special
16" large pizza
\$8.99 with this coupon

Get free Excal delivered
665-0062