

MOZART, from page 7

relationship will be more stable precisely because they have all too painfully become aware of their humanity. This is not tragedy: life must and does go on in spite of its or our imperfections. In the words of the concluding sextet of the opera, "Happy is the person who can see the bright side of things, and lets reason be his guide."

Indeed the lesson of *Così fan tutte* is unromantic and almost cruelly rational, hence the 19th century's inevitable antipathy. When one penetrates beneath its deceptively elegant and hilarious surface, as the Romantics and their 20th century spiritual children have not done, it is at once apparent that Mozart has here produced one of the most perfect and profound works of art in all of Western music.

Small wonder then that the Department of Music's production had its problems particularly from the point of view of overall conception. Above all it lacked subtlety. Musical director Strombergs seemed to have considerable misapprehensions about the tenor of the work despite his often perceptive feeling for Mozart's style, particularly in the finales. All too often he allowed the comedy to get out of hand and degenerate into farcical slapstick.

In addition, many of the musical metaphors went by the boards altogether. For example, by taking the trio, "May breezes blow gently" just a bit too fast, its naval metaphor which ingeniously links it to the second act and which permeates the opera in general, was lost. In addition there was really insufficient delineation of character among the pairs of lovers, and this was due not only to the soloists but to the conductor whose orchestral accompaniment aided and abetted this shortcoming. Finally, a little more rehearsal for the orchestra would also have been in order.

But on the whole the balance sheets must reckon it as a positive accomplishment. Despite the cuts, which seem to be endemic to the Music Department opera productions and are invariably an act of gross presumption on the part of mere academics, the opera held together well. The English translation and dislocation of the time and place of the action did minimal violence to the work. And Rowland Holt Wilson's stage direction put many professional companies, and especially our own EOA, to shame with its fluid handling of

scene after scene.

The soloists were in general surprisingly good. Singing both nights were Nigel Lemon (Ferrando), Peter Benecke (Guglielmo) and Elizabeth Kolodziej (Fiordiligi). Lemon and Benecke were for the most part steady though they handled their characters all too similarly. I found Lemon's "My love is a flower" a bit on the harsh or perhaps heroic side for the gentle and sensitive Ferrando, but he acquitted himself well in the ensembles.

Elizabeth Kolodziej's was impressively strong, but she faltered on the low notes in the enormously difficult "Strongly founded" aria of Act I. Dorabella was well cast both nights, though I preferred Barbara Prowse's flighty and impetuous interpretation on Wednesday to Marilyn Verbicky's (her verbatim was a bit too broad) on Thursday.

Despina on the other hand had problems both nights. Pauline Lebel on Wednesday was just a bit too harsh for a soubrette while Judith Holswick had a cute conception of the role but unfortunately a rather weak voice.

As for Don Alfonso, Frank Giffen proved steadier vocally on Wednesday than Henry Owen on Thursday, though the former's interpretation was much too cynical and the latter much closer to the quintessential humanity of the Don.

Mozart opera must make its dramatic gestures from small vocal nuances not just from acting or relying on the plot, and all singers still need work in this area. But with all it was a charming and wholly captivating production.

Franz Szabo

GINGERBREAD, from page 7

in part due to the mood the audience is in after completing a meal and a few drinks; I feel it is also a result of the actors' interpretation of the play as a whole. There should be a continuous build-up of tension and of pity for the characters, but this did not occur in full extent. The humor of the play was developed apart from rather than as a reflection of the underlying tragedy.

Nevertheless, the play does reach a highly professional level. Good food and good entertainment combine to make a very enjoyable and worthwhile evening. For eleven dollars what more can you ask for?

Kim St. Clair

rock notes

Grammy Nominations

As always, this year's presentation of the "Grammy Awards" will be a star-studded event. Among the rock and pop music stars already signed to appear on the show are Stevie Wonder, Randy Newman, Gladys Knight and the Pips, Barry White, Alice Cooper, David Essex, the Carpenters, Herb Alpert, Aretha Franklin, Marvin Hamlisch, and Ray Stevens. The telecast set for March 1 on CBS will be hosted by Andy Williams.

An interesting side-light to this year's Grammys: chances are four out of five that the winner for Record of the Year will be a woman. Elton John is the only male nominated for that top honor; he was nominated for "Don't Let the Sun Go Down on Me." The women competitors include: Roberta Flack, "Feel Like Makin' Love;" Joni Mitchell, "Help Me;" Maria Muldaur, "Midnight at the Oasis;" and Olivia Newton-John, "I Honestly Love You."

Conversely, the men have it four to one over the women for Album of the Year. Joni Mitchell's "Court and Spark" will be competing with John Denver's "Back Home Again," Elton John's "Caribou," Paul

McCartney and Wings' "Band on the Run," and Stevie Wonder's "Fulfillingness First Finale." Stevie, who won five Grammys last year, has seven nominations this time, three as a performer, two as a songwriter, and two more as a producer.

Elton's next single

Elton John says his next single will be a danceable tune called "Philadelphia Freedom." In an interview with *Cashbox*, Elton described it as "something you wouldn't expect." Explained Elton, "I do all the backing vocals like the Stylistics and sing the lead right down low. It's sort of a fast number you can dance to." Elton's next album, "Captain Fantastic and the Brown Dirt Cowboy," is due for a March release.

Steppenwolf in the studios

John Kay and Steppenwolf are back in the studios in Los Angeles recording their second album as a reunited band for Mums Records.

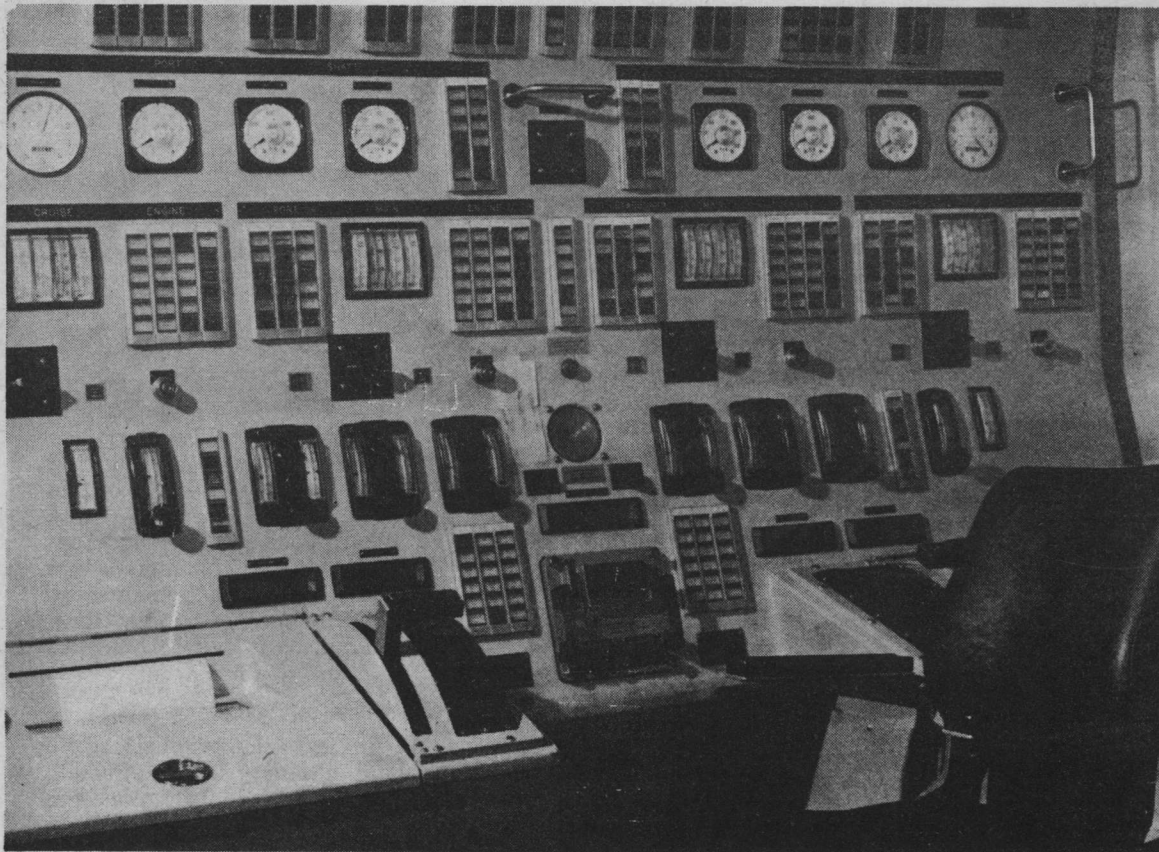
Star Trek Fans

More than 3,500 fans of the old *Star Trek* T.V. series gathered at Stanford University this week for a *Star Trek* convention key-noted by the series' creator and producer, Gene Roddenberry.

Roddenberry received a huge ovation when he announced that the entire original cast will be re-united for a feature-length film from Paramount, due for a release in the spring of 1976. In addition, he said, there are tentative plans to film several 90-minute or two-hour *Star Trek* specials for T.V. each season. Those, too, will be made with the original cast.

Roddenberry noted that the series, which ended six years ago, is still so successful that the Smithsonian Institution has obtained an episode from the series for its permanent file, as well as the original 11-foot model of the Starship Enterprise used in the filming.

Roddenberry said that the success of *Star Trek* did little to improve overall quality of television programming. "Someday," he said, "I hope there will be a USS Enterprise up there, and I hope the first salvo of photon torpedoes is aimed at NBCon second thought, aimed at all three networks."



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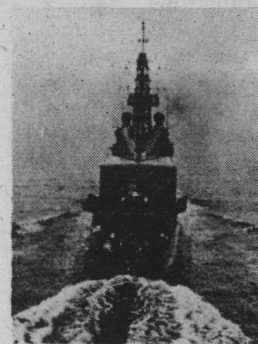
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