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Humourous opera is a rare treat at the Cohn

by M. Lynn Briand

Rarely are Rebecca Cohn patrons treated to opera. Saturday evening the newly-formed Vancouver-based "Opera Piccola" Company, as part of their Canadian tour, entertained the hosting audience with two humourous one-act performances.

The company, new to the professional opera field, is to be applauded for potential and an undying effort on stage. At present, it has neither experience as a company, nor top performers, but is a start for many aspiring opera singers. Exposure to both the public and the 'on the road life' style remain precious for all star-famed individuals, especially as their voices continue to mature and develop.

The disadvantage of choosing humourous opera is its requirement for an undiminishing energy drive, theatrical agility and ability to over-exaggerate.

As is common with many upstarts, light-hearted scenes are preferred. The writings are canny and one need merely vocalize the punch lines. Stage props and costumes aid in amusing the viewer, but truly successful buffoonery always demands something special - a spark. Opera Piccola chose Pasatieri's "Signor Deluso" and Haydn's "La Canterina" as their vehicle.

Brightly coloured stage props and medieval jester-like millin-

ery pleased all in the opening opera of "Signor Deluso". The interpretation was enjoyable, but not impressive. Regrettably the dramatization fell short of expectations. Eric Oland's role as Signor Deluso, the utter fool, was energetically delivered; others required more spunk.

To the audience's delight both works were sung in English. It can be utterly annoying to be favoured with an elaborate set and fine musicians, yet not understand a word or pun muttered and, in turn, miss the humourous anecdotes which have been skillfully inserted by the composer. Since the language was English, plot comprehension was full, with the exception of the occasional obstruction by the over zealous chamber orchestra.

Each singer exhibited well-controlled production. Nicely placed high notes were reached in the latter half of "Signor Deluso" by Leslie Allison, validating her qualifications in the demanding role of Celie.

Ensemble work in both productions proved to be the strong points of the performances - in some respects, the highlights. Performers gelled in mind and body as one, executing four-part ensemble work with finesse and capturing the audience.

The more successful of the two operas, Joseph Haydn's "La Canterina", tickled memories of the typical singing lesson without ignoring the conformable

rivalry of lovers and cunning manoeuvres of a female. Haydn wove humourous song and speech together ingeniously in a solemn 18th Century setting that was seized with pungency.

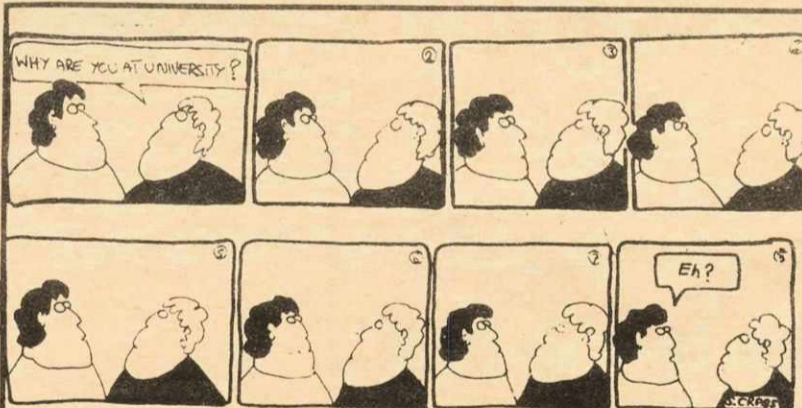
The voice quality of Richard Margison, hinted at earlier in Pasatieri's opera, emerged astoundingly in the minstrel's role. Deep and rich in tone, his proved the more developed voice among his colleagues, resonating beautifully throughout the Cohn.

For some unexplainable reason, the staging in "La Canterina" required (unnecessary) rearranging of furniture dead centre in the performance. The damage was irreparable. The momentum suffered, distracting viewers' thought which had until then flowed coherently.

Under the direction of talented Lynn Jemison, who was both the musical director and pianist, the musicians were adequate. They neither lacked accuracy nor delivered sparkle - the mechanics were seeping out.

In general the evening proved, as previously claimed, enjoyable, not impressive. It highlighted the vigour and ability of fine young talented singers.

Two performances - Antigoni and Charlottetown - remain for the company. Following the tour's termination each member returns to their own schedule, inclusive of lessons and preparation of the next performance we anxiously await.



by Matt R. Afakt

- Robert Pirsig searched for self discovery in *Zen and the Art of Motorcycle Maintenance*, following the trail made by whom?
 - Oedipus
 - Phaedrus
 - De Tocqueville
 - Gerald Ford
- David Copperfield's two wives were...
 - Dora and Agnes
 - Dora and Peggoty
 - Sarah and Peggoty
 - Wayne and Shuster
- Who is John Caravella?
 - Dr. Feelgood
 - Dr. John
 - Dr. Johnny Fever
 - Dr. Brothers
- Pearl Bodine's favourite son was Jethro. She also had a daughter named what?
 - Jethrine
 - Opal
 - Ellie
 - Judy

- Who was *Playboy's* first bunny centrefold?
 - Candy Samples
 - Janet Pilgrim
 - Sue Morgan
 - Alexa McDonough



Trivia Quiz

- The Singing Seashells did Chattanooga Choo-Choo. Who first recorded this ditty?
 - Frank Sinatra
 - Glenn Miller
 - Tommy Dorsey
 - Tommy Newsom

- Which country rocker used to be one of Buddy Holly's Crickets?
 - Waylon Jennings
 - Charlie Daniels
 - Johnny Burnette
 - Hank Snow
- Clark Kent is Superman, Bruce Banner is...
 - Batman
 - The Flash
 - The Hulk
 - Wildman Dave
- Blondie's maiden name is what?
 - Dithers
 - Bumstead
 - Boopadoop
 - Logan
- Who portrayed pitching great Grover Cleveland Alexander in *The Winning Team*?
 - Grover Cleveland Alexander
 - Spencer Tracy
 - Clark Gable
 - Ronald Reagan
- Baseball owner Bill Veeck (as in wreck) of Chicago once sent in this 3'7" man to pinch hit, (He walked on four pitches). Who?
 - Tiny Thompson
 - Eddie Gaedel
 - Bobby Brownlow
 - Tommy Ozere
- Who set the house fire in which John Randolph was killed?
 - Robert Delaney
 - Sven the Butler
 - Olive Gordon
 - God