

# Horne blows away Cohn

by Debra Perrott

For those of us who have long admired Marilyn Horne as a recording artiste, her appearance with the Atlantic Symphony Orchestra was both a pleasure and an education.

Having intense admiration for the Italian tenor, it was clear to me that Miss Horne's strength lies not in her ability to pervade the auditorium with sheer energy of sound, but in the high degree to which she has developed her art. An art which expresses itself in both dramatic and technical mastery.

For any who have heard Janet Baker in concert, the same fullness and use of covered tone could be noted in Miss Horne's singing, particu-

larly in her rendition of Vivaldi's "Fonti di pianto".

Marilyn Horne, a singer with a lovely countenance, has

been hailed by critics the world over for her technical wizardry. "Sorge l'irato nembo", another selection from Vivaldi's "Orlando Furioso", was the perfect vehicle with which to exercise this incredible vocal agility. Not only did Miss Horne's range command envy from a lovely voice student, but the ease with which she covered this range was cause for extreme frustration. One could not help being impressed by the evenness of tone throughout. Each note was treated with care, and passages, no matter how difficult, seemed to grow out of what had gone on before.

At this point, I was disappointed with the backing the orchestra gave Miss Horne. It was competent, but lacked the energy needed for this piece to sparkle.

"Que faro senza me Eury-

dice". Festival enthusiasts have heard this selection from Gluck's, "Orpheo and Eurydice", butchered time and again. At long last, a Halifax audience heard Gluck's music as it was meant to be sung. The combination of vocal maturity, technical ability, and Miss Horne's particular sense for dramatic pathos brought an intensity to this song which was duly appreciated by the audience.

An encore of Donizetti in which Miss Horne was especially vibrant, and applause, brought her brief appearance to a close. It left me not with a feeling of warmth which I feel after hearing Jessye Norman, or the excitement which is Pavarotti's brilliance, but with a sense of professional admiration and respect for that special quality which is Marilyn Horne.



Paul Moreno's Spanish Dance Company will perform with the Atlantic Symphony this Sunday, December 3. For information and tickets, contact Arts Centre box office.

## Bolt on Cdn. theatre

by William Dodge

Toronto playwright Carol Bolt, recipient of a silver Jubilee Medal as well as being a Chalmers Award finalist for her thriller, "One Night Stand," was in Studio 1 of the Dalhousie Arts Centre last week talking about Canadian theatre.

After saying she had met resistance to the subject of Canadian writing all over the country, Bolt eventually drifted into the old familiar lament over economics, that 'nitty-gritty' determinant of the arts (and just about everything) in Canada these days.

But after the multitude of laments we've heard from Canadian artists, I can't help

wondering if foreigners aren't convinced Canadians are performing some secret, well-cultured rite of self-flagellation.

Maybe you are acquainted with this gray fixture of the Canadian imagination, this inferior dwarf, locked-up in America's attic, disturbed by visions of giant 'Sasquatch' footprints.

Bolt said she had a nightmare in which a *Toronto Star* play critic was persecuting her. She could think of only one way to get rid of her, find her a job in New York.

Her own love for Toronto is "completely irrational," she said. Bolt knows she can make a living in New York and she is well aware of the great body of

Canadian opinion that thinks Canadian artists are inferior if they choose to work in Canada. But she accepts the challenge and has incorporated it thematically into some of her work.

"I would like to be able to write comedy thrillers for Toronto audiences," she said, "that would be successful enough not to need state funding."

In what she called a typical Canadian experience, she said her producer was ashamed of 'One Night Stand' when it first opened. He called it "too commercial." Four weeks later when it broke even he was yelling "Bravo!"

"As a writer you have a property and you know you

can either go and work with an Al Pacino or stay and work closely with a group of dedicated people and go through a vital learning experience," she said.

"Now-a-days if you want to get a play on stage in Toronto, it has to be restricted to the one-act, three-actor size of production. . . I don't think CBC cutbacks will change the pressure playwrights are already under," said Bolt.

"Real innovators have to

start their own theatres, working in rooms above laundromats and garages. . . But the actors have to be good," she said, "or people will get tired of paying 2 dollars for chocolate cake."

Carol Bolt's talk is part of a national tour co-ordinated by the Playwrights Co-op with support from the Canada Council. She was the second playwright presented by the Dalhousie Theatre Department this term.

continued from page 12

individual Company members reflects the improvements in the group as a whole. There are similarities and differences which serve to heighten the total effect.

The storyline of *The Sound of Music* is one that is well recognized: A postulate for the Nunnery is sent as a governess to the home of a widower with whom she falls in love. The film version features Julie Andrews and Christopher Plummer as the primary antagonists, while the Kipawo Showboat Company cast Gertrude Bishop and John Brown in the title roles. Bishop gave an adequate performance as Maria, although she seemed to experience some difficulty in adjusting from scene to scene. Brown was a major disappointment in his enigmatic portrayal of Captain Von Trapp. Not only did his physical demeanor seem inappropriate, his voice did not carry well, diction was sloppy, and the entire performance lacked any kind of enthusiasm.

The ineffectualness of the main characters served to highlight individual efforts on the part of other Company members. Jean Marshall was excellent as the Mother Abess, and her "Climb Every

Mountain" was beautifully and movingly sung. Yvonne White, a welcome addition to any musical production, proved that a strong lyrical voice can be successfully combined with admirable characterization, as demonstrated in her regrettably minor role as Sister Margaretta. Future productions could benefit from her experience and strength.

The Von Trapp children were indeed a mixed bundle: Deborah Stevens' Liesl was strong and well acted, and Margo MacCluskey as Brigitta was impishly pleasing. Carolyn Munro displayed a fine musical talent, and Orinda Bishop as Little Gretl gave the play some moments of childlike warmth. The two Von Trapp boys were relegated to the background, as neither gave a strong performance.

Kristine Driscoll's role as Captain Von Trapp's intended did not give this talented performer a great deal to work with, and her coupling with Brown's Von Trapp did not help the situation. The Happy-go-lucky 'Uncle Max', played by Bob Martyn, was suitably shallow and selfish, although Martyn tended to be just a little too exuberant at times.

As with other Showboat productions, the chorus num-

bers were those that gave the strongest musical offerings. The cloister of nuns singing prayers was a joy to hear; the lyrical richness a pleasure in itself. The Von Trapp children combined their musical talents to produce a surprisingly pleasing quality of sound.

The stage management was, for the most part quite good, although several awkward moments could have been avoided. In particular, the scene between Rolf and Liesl as they dance in the garden ("Sixteen Going on Seventeen") was stilted and cumbersome, as was the declaration of love between Maria and the Captain. One of the better moments, choreographically, was when the children and Maria get together during the thunder and lightning storm to sing "The Lonely Goatherd".

Costuming was handled appropriately, and the children's attire was most becoming and imaginative. The one costuming fault that seems to plague Showboat productions is footwear—there appears to be a lack of knowledge when it comes to foot fashion.

The overall effect was one of pleasurable entertainment; the Company expends a lot of energy, but is rewarded with audience appreciation and approval.

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