

# "Met" took 30 years to find a Turandot

By Irving Kolodin  
Saturday Review Service

NEW YORK — New York acquired a new "must see" attraction with the first performance of Puccini's Turandot at the Metropolitan in thirty years, and one which shows the art of operatic production at its contemporary best. It would be notable for the decor and costumes of Cecil Beaton alone, or the direction of Yoshio Aoyama, or the singing of Birgit Nilsson, or the conducting of Leopold Stokowski.

But it wouldn't be Turandot. It is the combination of these artistic efforts, working in unity (or as near to unity as can be expected in the interaction of so many strong-minded individuals) that has brought an experience in the musical theatre to match anything — ballet, musical comedy, spectacle theatre — seen here in recent years.



Birgit Nilsson  
As Turandot

Why then, the question can be anticipated, has it taken so long for the Met to "get around" to Turandot? Perhaps in the first place, for the sound rule of the operatic theatre known to any prudent director, and propounded in epigrammatic form by Gustav Mahler: "Don't give an opera if you can't cast the title role." It has taken this time for a singer of the vocal power and musical intelligence of the Swedish Nilsson to devote herself to the problem, and make a new surge of Turandot performances, here and abroad, possible. (Others who might have done it, didn't; and those who did, mostly couldn't.)

Tenors to sing the music of Prince Calaf are less infrequent but hardly common; in Franco Corelli, the Met has probably the best now available — and a man of striking good stage appearance as well.

The perils in such an undertaking are, of course, not dissolved by a successful premiere, for there is always the question: who sings Turandot or Calaf when Nilsson or Corelli can't? Turandot is hardly the kind of opera in which a company can be three or four deep. Fortunately, however, both performers are of the durable sort, strong not only of voice, but also of general physique. So the immediate prognosis is a favorable one.

Moreover, it is my belief that the example of Nilsson, in particular, will prompt others to emulate and perhaps to equal her, in the spirit of the sentiment, "What one human being has done, another can do." It must not be forgotten that of all the original Turandots (Raisa, Jeritza, Lehmann, Muzio, et al) only one, Eva Turner, had been a singer of the heroic Wagnerian parts as Nilsson has been. And Turner, unquestionably, was the best prior to Nilsson.

So an impresario looking to the future for his Turandots, might consult the list of Sieglinde and such rather than the Toscas (or even Aidas). Which, at the moment, might well mean Leonie Rysanek among others.

# Muskets, brake drums, pop bottles

By Lauretta Thistle

Maybe it is the influence of March. This seems to be the week for noise, more or less musical.

John Cage, Henry Cowell, Lou Harrison, Amadeo Roldan and William Russell: Concert Percussion for Orchestra. "Orchestra" conducted by Cage and Paul Price. Time, stereo, 58000.

The list of instruments used in this "orchestra" (pod rattles, brake drums, an empty ginger ale bottle, and John Cage's famous "prepared piano" as well as more usual percussion) may suggest advanced jazz. But the composers are all serious musicians, and this collection of percussion novelties deserves serious listening.

Music students will enjoy the complexity of the rhythmic patterns — waltzes in seven-four time, marches in three-four — and everybody whose mind isn't closed off to novelty completely will enjoy the delicacy of Cowell's Ostinato Pianissimo.

Beethoven: Wellington's Victory, Leonore Overture No. 3 and Prometheus Overture. Lon-

don Symphony Orchestra (plus cannon from West Point), Antal Dorati conducting. Spoken commentary by Deems Taylor. Mercury, stereo, LPS-5000.

This will probably be the definitive recording of Beethoven's slambang noisy battle piece. On top of a splendidly boom-boom recording by the London Orchestra, Mercury has superimposed the sound of cannon and muskets (some of them dating back to 1761) from West Point Academy. It is all done with tremendous precision, and the program notes (spoken and written) are done just as carefully for the cannon as for the music.

On the other side, the Prometheus Overture is given an especially spirited performance (without cannon) and the Leonora No. 3 (no muskets) sounds fine too.

Offenbach: Tales of Hoffmann (excerpts). Sung in French by Rita Streich, Hanna Ludwig, Hedi Klug, William McAlpine and others. Berlin Radio Symphony Orchestra, conducted by Richard Kraus. Deutsche Grammophon, LPEM 19230.

## Honor Ukrainian Poet

Ukrainians will celebrate the 100th anniversary of their national poet, Taras Shevchenko, by singing his verse, Sunday, March 12 at 3 p.m. in the National Museum. The combined Ukrainian choirs of Ottawa will be conducted by J. J. Tokaryk and guest soloists will be Matilda Lazarowich and O. Hoshuliak from Toronto. Evelyn Greenberg will be the accompanist and also play a solo.

## Public Invited

Members of the Ottawa Grand Opera Association will sing for the Institut Canadien - Francais d'Ottawa, 95 York Street, Sunday, March 12 at 8.45 p.m. The public is invited to attend.

## Adolescent Theme

The Young Stranger (1957 release), a tender story of adolescence, is the Ottawa Film Society Series Two selection, Monday at 8.15 at the National Museum. Fred Zinneman's short film, Benji, about a children's orthopedic hospital, will also be shown.

## Museum Concert

National folk dances by the Ukrainian Folk Ensemble of Montreal will be performed on Wednesday at 8.15 in the National Museum. Pianist Luba



J. J. Tokaryk  
Conducts On Sunday

Most of the familiar airs, including Olympia's song and the Barcarolle, are here, and the singing is generally good. Rita Streich's coloratura is precise and musical (with an easy top E). The quality of the French by these German singers is variable, but Mr. McAlpine is at ease both linguistically and vocally as Hoffmann. The jacket notes are fairly extensive, but not too helpful in telling you what characters sing which arias; you'll have to do some deductive work yourself.

And on the popular side: Carefree is an apt description for Percy Faith's new album (Columbia, CL 1560). The good cheer of the Pizzicato Polka is typical of the atmosphere. Among the other pieces: Lisa, Brazilian Sleigh Bells, Go-Go-Go-Go. . . . Several old-time favorites are collected on Harmony disc HL 7255. Among them, Woody Herman's Woodchopper's Ball, and Xavier Cugat's Cherry Pink and Apple Blossom White. Also present: Benny Goodman, Count Basie, Sarah Vaughan and Rosemary Clooney.

# Music and the Theatre

## What's on next week

Zuk of the McGill Faculty of Music, will also be heard.

### Organ Recital

Symphony No. 2 by Widor will be played by organist Russell Green in his noonday recital, Thursday at 12.15 in the First Baptist Church.

### French Theatre

French contemporary theatre from Adiberti to Ionesco will be discussed by Dr. P. Melese in a talk on Avant Gardist Theatre in Room 433A at Carleton University, Thursday at 8.30 p.m.

### Beat The Irish?

The play, You Can't Beat the Irish will be presented by the St. Patrick's Senior C.Y.O., March 16-19 in the parish hall. Members of the cast include: Dorothy Garvin, Margaret Crockett, Bill Ryan, Michael O'Grady, Art Wright, Roger DesRivieres, Theresa Darcy, Bob Ryan, Sadie MacNeil and Clare White.

### Golden King

The third performance of the King of the Golden River, last of this season's series of plays by the Ottawa Theatre for Children, will be held in Fisher Park High School, Saturday, March 18 at 2.30 p.m.

### Junior Musicians

Young performers who will take part in the Laurentian Junior Music Club program at Laurentian High School, Saturday, at 2.30 p.m. include: Wendy Gilmore, Margaret Stewart, Susan Cutler, Brian Donaldson, Michael Smale, Deborah Scharf, Ricky Armour, Greg Rheume, Marsha Coghill, Phillip Parker, Beth-Lee Gordon, Margaret Metcalfe, Linda Hickman, Heather Sword, Susan McGregor, Duncan Bell-Irving, Wayne Fraser, Sharon Boyer, Linda Yeats, Gail Donaldson, Greg Swyers, Lynne Holliday and Peggy Ryan.

### Concert Preview

On Saturday, March 18 at 4 p.m., children may hear a preview of the all-French program to be given by the Fireside Music Club. Joyce Sands will present works by Saint-Saens, Faure and Chausson at her home, 27 Somerset St. W.

### OCSPEBSQSA

Out-of-town quartets will sing in the Technical School, Saturday at 8 p.m. in the annual competition of the Ottawa Chapter of the Society for the Preservation and Encouragement of Barber Shop Quartet Singing in America.

### Mr. Waddington

Geoffrey Waddington, of the



Geoffrey Waddington  
Lectures Saturday



Luba Zuk  
Plays At Museum

CBC music department, will give a public lecture on the CBC's contribution to music next Saturday night at 8.30 in Jefferson Hall of St. Matthew's Church. The lecture, to which the public is welcome, is sponsored by the local branches of the Registered Music Teachers Association and the Royal Canadian College of Organists.

### Band Concert

Mrs. Winnifred Watson of Hamilton and Dr. William Lorimer of Prescott will be featured soloists with the Parkdale Citadel Band at a musical festival, Saturday, March 18 at 8 p.m. in the Salvation Army Parkdale Citadel.

## Famous duo to play here

Viennese violist Paul Doktor and pianist Yaltah Menuhin will play for the Morning Music Club March 27 in Glebe Collegiate.

Both are members of internationally known musical families. Paul Doktor, who in 1942 was the first violist to win the International Music Competition in Geneva, is the son of the late Karl Doktor of the famous Busch String Quartet. He is a member of the faculty of Mannes College of Music in New York and is on the faculty of a Colorado summer school.

Yaltah Menuhin, sister of violinist Yehudi Menuhin, took her early training in Europe and studied later in the United States with Carl Friedberg and Adolph Baller.

## Only group from Canada

The Classical Ballet Concert Group has been invited to perform Mezzartiana at the Northeastern Regional Ballet Festival to be held in Dayton, Ohio, May 4. For the third year in succession, it will be the only Canadian company in the Festival.

Today this ballet, with others, is being performed in Deep River. Other dates in the Group's spring touring schedule are: Buckingham, March 18; Hawkesbury, April 8; Cornwall, May 13; and Pembroke, May 19.