

OPERA SUPERS of Iowa City NEWSLETTER

Vol. 1, No. 3 February 1986

Editor: Arthur Canter, 338-1217
30 Brookfield Drive. Iowa City

REMINDER: Next scheduled meeting is MONDAY, MARCH 10 at 7:00 p.m. in the lounge of the Music Building.

LETTER FROM THE EDITOR

I am pleased to announce that I did receive two entries for the second BORIS QUIZ. (More on that later.)

There seems to have been a misunderstanding by a number of the active Supers regarding the tear sheet placed in the last issue of the newsletter. We want to have an accurate record of those persons desiring to serve as "active" Supers, as well as those who do not wish to be active but want to continue receiving the newsletter. It is realized that a number of you are "active," but for one reason or another are unable to attend the Monday night meetings. Even though from our association with you we may know who you are, we still need you to fill out and return this form. If you fall in either category ("active" or "inactive, but keep me on the mailing list), and you have not already done so, please fill out the tear sheet from the January newsletter and return it to Mona Shaw, 2075 Music Building. If you do not have the January newsletter, just send a note with your name, address, and a statement reflecting your preferences. Failing to hear from you will be taken as an indication that you want your name dropped from our mailing list. Let me remind our readers that the Supers plan some activities that include only those persons who are active participants in Opera Supers as a reward for their volunteer efforts. Receiving the newsletter does not mean that you will automatically be included in these special activities. Perhaps you will be motivated to become active as you read about our plans and functions.

FEBRUARY 10TH MEETING REPORT

The attendance at the meeting was slightly better than at our last meeting, even though we were competing with political party caucus night, influenzal illnesses, and the usual Monday night conflicts of some of our actives.

Mona Shaw referred to the "homestretch" period for BORIS and gave us an update of the status of ticket sales. Mary Beth Barteau, from Arts Outreach, was introduced. She reported on arrangements being developed for the Simon Estes Masterclass to be held on April 28 (the Monday after the last BORIS performance) from 10:30 a.m.-12:30 p.m. There will be special programs for invited visitors (vocal students, voice faculty,

etc.) from outside Iowa City preceding the Sunday performance. The programs will include a reception at Hancher, a backstage tour, and a pre-performance lecture. There will be a continental breakfast before the Monday morning masterclass for the visitors, Simon Estes, and our own voice faculty and voice students. The Supers are asked to help with these programs by serving as hosts, guides, "cookie-bakers," etc. This is an example of how one gets to be an "active" Super. A sign-up sheet for volunteers to act as hosts for the Sunday reception was spontaneously started during the meeting. PLEASE NOTE: DAYLIGHT SAVINGS TIME STARTS THAT SUNDAY, APRIL 27TH. If you have trouble remembering the direction, TURN YOUR CLOCKS AHEAD ONE HOUR, before retiring

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MEETING REPORT CONT.

Saturday night. Other Outreach activities involving the Dormitory Council, the Greek Councils, etc. were described by Ms. Barteau.

Committee reports were then heard. Publicity activities were reviewed. Make note that the March issue of HORIZON magazine will have an eight-page spread on the Cedar Rapids-Iowa City "cultural corridor." One section will cover the UI School of Music. Copies of the magazine will be available at the Hancher Showcase. Spot TV announcements will occur during half-times of Iowa Basketball game telecasts. These will focus upon the Simon Estes success story. Time has been made available on one of the broadcast periods during IPBN Friends Week for the Supers to help sell BORIS tickets as well as take pledges for IPBN.

The situation regarding the types of parties and who will be invited was reviewed by Miriam Canter. Dates have already been set for some of these events. (See Announcements)

Discussion of membership requirements was deferred to the next meeting. Social time completed the meeting which ended about 9:00 p.m. I repeat the comments made in the last report of a Supers meeting--Mona Shaw runs a tight meeting and follows a prepared agenda. All present have a productive as well as enjoyable time. And the refreshments are home-made. May we see more Supers at our next meeting.

ANNOUNCEMENTS, HELP NEEDED

Opera Supers along with School of Music staff and students, and Arts Center Relations and UI Foundation staff will be featured on MASTERPIECE THEATRE night of IPBN Friends Week. Our group will be on the air from 6:30-11:00 p.m. on Sunday evening, March 9th. Be sure to watch.

Two parties are planned that will involve the Supers' help. One is a reception for students in music, theatre and dance on Monday, April 7th from 4:00-5:30 p.m., and one is for students and faculty in the Russian Department on

Monday, April 14th from 4:00-5:30 p.m. Both will be held in the Lounge of the Music Building. Cookies, punch and help in hosting will be needed for these events. Please call Miriam Canter, 338-1217; Nadine Hardy, 338-4079; or Mona Shaw, 353-5626; if you wish to help.

Scenery painters are needed for the BORIS sets, most are flat pieces. Call Mary Wall evenings during the week or anytime on weekends at 338-2618, or Mona Shaw, 353-5626. Painting may be done during daytime hours or at night.

Sewing assistance is needed for simple sewing. Work can be done in the costume shop or at home. Call Shirley Harrison, 337-5729.

The Music Study Club of Iowa City will sponsor a recital by Opera Theater students accompanied by Beaumont Glass at 1:00 p.m., Wednesday, April 9th in Harper Hall of the Music Building. Everyone is invited. You need not be a member of the Music Study Club to attend and enjoy this event.

EVANGELINE NOEL GLASS, soprano, will give a recital at 3:00 p.m., Sunday, March 16 in Clapp Hall. There will be a reception after the program.

BORIS QUIZ WINNER

Your editor received two entries to the second BORIS quiz. The first received was from Mary Wall, and the answers were entirely correct. The second was sent in by Rhea Sandven (Dubuque) a week later and, while not as complete as Mary's entry, deserves recognition. Both entries gave evidence of what I had hoped to achieve by the Quiz, i.e., to motivate readers to dig a bit deeper into the BORIS story and opera. Not all of us have access to the libretto, but by turning to other sources we can learn details about this opera that may increase the appetite for opera in general, prepare us to be better listeners, and help us enjoy any specific opera more.

The answers to the quiz are: The full name of Dimitri the Pretender was Grishka (Grigori) Otrypyev. The source of his belief that he was the true Dimitri was a dream that he kept having (3 times) which he interpreted with the help of Pimen as a sign that he was the true Dimitri.

First prize goes to Mary Wall and will consist of an audio cassette tape with renditions of Boris monologues by two famous Borises: Christoff and London, plus a bonus of the death scene monologue sung by Mark Reizen, a Bolshoi bass in the best tradition of Russian basses. Rhea Sandven earns a copy of the George London rendition. Who knows, I may tack some other delights to fill up time in the cassettes for both. The lesson to readers? You can be rewarded just for trying.

NOTES, TRIVIA and Miscellanea

A BORIS GODUNOV by Tchaikowsky?

I have come across the information that one of Tchaikowsky's early compositions was a scene of Pushkin's Boris Godunov which Tchaikowsky composed about 1863-64. It was either destroyed by the composer (which he was known to do) or neglected and lost among his effects. Suppose he had developed this into a complete opera at that time. What would Mussorgsky have done?

BORIS as the only complete Mussorgsky opera.

It is true. BORIS GODUNOV was the only one of his seven operas that Mussorgsky completed. (And in two versions, at that!) The reasons for completing only BORIS require investigation and ^{may} prove to be interesting. Was it the topic? Was it something personal? His work habits, chronic alcoholism, and life circumstances all play a role in his having left so many works incomplete. But why not BORIS? The irony of the matter is that despite the fact that he did complete BORIS, it took the orchestrated versions by other composers to get it heard and established in opera repertoires. Only in recent times have the original two versions by Mussorgsky been heard repeatedly. I hope to devote some space in the next newsletter to some aspect of BORIS and Mussorgsky vis-a-vis the role of the Simpleton or Fool in the drama, the opera, and Mussorgsky's apparent self-concept. With this much as a clue as to my intention, I welcome comments from readers.

First U.S. performance of BORIS.

This took place in 1913 at the Met in the Rimsky-Korsakov second version with the Polish bass, Adam Didur, in the title role. It was conducted by Toscanini. Chaliapin did not perform the role in this country until eight years later, also at the Met. The first U.S. performance of the original Mussorgsky version appears to have been in Boston. (The year is not known by the editor, but I assume it may have been in the early 1960's, after Caldwell took over. Someone out there must know and can tell us.)

Four brothers as Boris!

The remarkable family of Pirigov (Russia) produced four brothers, all basses, who sang the role of Boris at different times in their operatic careers with major Russian companies and elsewhere in Europe. They were (in order of birth) Grigory (1885-1931), Mikhail (1887-1933), Alexey (stage name, Pirigov-Okskin, 1895-?), and Alexander (1899-1964). The best known of the four was the youngest.

Katherine Henjum (former UI student) will be singing in the MERRY WIDOW (Lehar) for the Virginia Opera for seven performances from February 28 to March 14 at the Carpenter Center in Richmond.

Carolynne James (former UI faculty member) will be singing in HANSEL AND GRETEL (Humperdinck) for Opera Delaware, February 26, 28, and March 1, at the Grand Opera House, Wilmington.

Martha Sheil (former UI faculty) has joined the voice faculty at the University of Michigan at Ann Arbor. She had previously joined the roster at New York City Opera when she left Iowa. Some of you may remember as Cio-Cio San in BUTTERFLY in that wonderful performance at Hancher (July 1978).

HANCHER AUDITORIUM
April 25, 26, 27, 1986

REMINDERS

Next meeting: Monday, March 10th, 7pm, Music Lounge
Daylight Savings Time starts Sunday, April 12.
Your help is needed for several ventures--become an "active" by volunteering.

Contacts for activities and newsletter feedback are:

Arthur Canter, 338-1217; newsletter

Miriam Canter, 338-1217; assisting parties, baking cookies, etc.

Nadine Hardy, 338-4079; same as Miriam

Mary Wall, 338-2618 (evenings & weekends only); painting scenery

Shirley Harrison, 337-5729; costumes

Mona Shaw, 353-5626; any activity

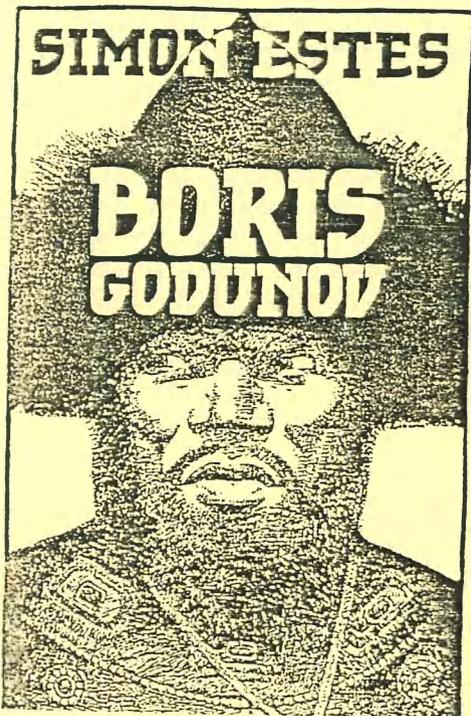
DO YOU HAVE YOUR BORIS TICKETS YET?

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