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MUSICAL MOMENTS

Handel's 'Messiah,' choice Yule concert

By ADAH K. JENKINS
AFRO Music Critic

One of the choice yuletide experiences is hearing Handel's "Messiah." Although the music is the same each choral group and each soloist brings to this monumental work something individual and precious. Perhaps that's the "magic of music."

Our recent hearing was at the Lyric with the Baltimore Symphony, conducted by Rainer Miedel.

Soloists were: our own Jeanetta Walters, soprano; Joan Caplan, mezzo; John Lankston, tenor and Robert Mosley, baritone.

Choral responsibilities were taken by the Glee Club and Chapel Choir of Goucher College and Glee Club of Johns Hopkins University, trained by George Woodhead.

Miedel chose a livelier pace for the excerpts from Parts I and II of oratorio, which the orchestra performed with admirable clarity and sensitive appreciation for the soloists.

The Miedel approach was at no time ponderous and heavy, so that the genius of the Handel writing for both instruments and voices was apparent.

• • •

In the selection of soloists he had singers of imposing quality, both in vocalization and interpretation.

Jeanette Walters' tone quality and production was of her usual top L with coloratura passages crystal clear and with an especially moving rendition of the aria "Come Unto Me."

With a voice of warm, smooth proportion Joan Caplan offered the role written for contralto.

Lankston's assurance was adequate for the tenor, with addition on occasion of embellishments which Baroque period permitted soloists.

The famous bass arias and recitatives, which abound in this oratorio, were taken with rare authority and sensitive understanding by Mosley, the black baritone.

His hushed "Who may abide" and "The people that walked in darkness" offered a vivid contrast to the tremendous crescendos of "a refining fire" and "a great light."

Although the excellently trained choral group used a rather light tone quality for the heavy choral passages, the voice leading was impeccable.

To their credit, there was no shouting that only too often passes for effective style in oratorios.

The S.R.O. audience enthusiastically applauded the production. After 228 years, "Messiah" is unsurpassed as "one of the greatest manifestations of inspirational art.

• • •

CALENDAR: Fri., Sat., and Sun., Dec. 18, 19 and 20, at 7 p.m. in the Tawes Art Center, U. of Md., College Park, musical "The Wizard of Oz," by the University Theatre. Special rates for parties of 20 or more.

• • •

Wed. Dec. 23, at 10 a.m. at Dulany Sr. High School, Timonium, children's musical "Christmas for Laura," by the husband and wife team, William T. Myers and Sandra A. Lee, produced by Pat Spring and Timonium Elementary School students.

Cast includes Jeanne Brown and Bruce Nobson, with supporting from the new Music Theatre Class, initiated by Mr. Myers. Dan Funk and Greg Wallace are senior student directors. Admission is free.

• • •

Sat., Sun. and Mon., Dec. 26, 27 and 28 at 2:30 p.m. at Catonsville, Pikesville and Towson Senior High Schools. The annual Christmas festival by the Md. Ballet Co., directed by Danny Diamond. "The Children's Corner" (music by Debussy) and Act. II of the "Nutcracker Suite" and the Snow Scene. Tickets may be purchased at the schools.

Sun. Feb. 28 in Shriver Hall, Johns Hopkins University, the Salzo Marionette Theatre in "Snow White" at 2:30 p.m. and "Don Giovanni" at 8:30 p.m. sponsored by Young Audiences. Call 367-1263 for ticket information.

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Rep. Conyers shoots for Dawson unit

WASHINGTON — A squabble is brewing over the House Government Operations Committee seat left vacant by the death of Rep. William L. Dawson, D.-Ill., its chairman.

Rep. John Conyers, D, Mich., cited his six-year seniority in letters to Rep. Chet Hollifield, D. Calif., members of the committee and members of the Ways and Means Committee, where assignments are made.

But the seat is a traditional Illinois slot and Rep. Dan Rostenkowski, wheelhorse of the Illinois delegation, wants it for newly-elected Rep. George W. Collins.

• • •

"I'm not going to sit back and let them hand-pick whom they want," says Conyers. "I have a right to the vacancy."

Collins takes a milder view.

"We are not at odds over the spot. At least I'm not. My delegation wants me there, but I have no quarrel with John Conyers about it."

WIDE EYED AND FILLED WITH WONDER three month old Michelle Lynn Davenport sits between her parents, Mr. and Mrs. James (Frances) Davenport in the living room of their home after she was christened by Rev. Mr. Harold Carter at the New Shiloh Baptist Church on Sunday. The Davenports have one other child, seven-year-old Gary, without whose help this photo may never have been taken. Michelle's bright eyed interest is in her big brother (who made faces) and not the photographer who tried desperately to get her attention. Photo by AFRO staff photographer Frank Phillips.

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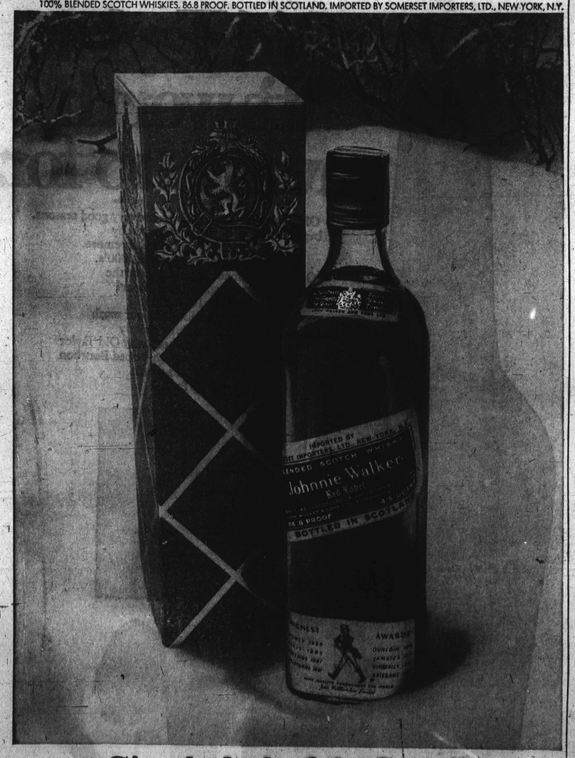

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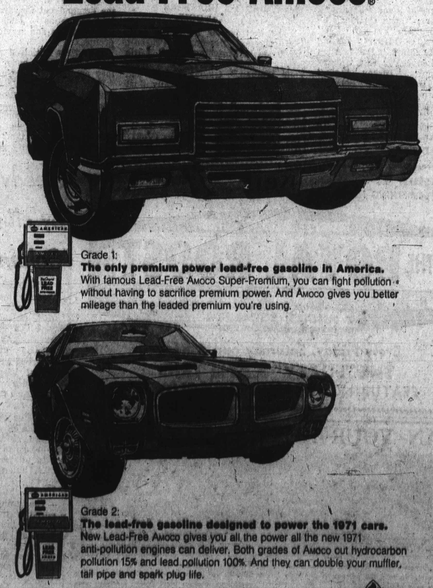

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NEW PROVIDENT OPENS IT DOORS — The Provident Hospital Complex was officially opened in ribbon cutting ceremonies on Friday. Standing in the electrically controlled door of the main entrance, are (left to right) Henry J. Whyte, administrator of the Hospital; George L. Russell, city solicitor; Mayor Thomas D'Alesandro; and Councilwoman Victorine Q. Adams.

Mrs. Brackett honored

At the recent annual conference of the National Community School Education Association held in Phoenix, Arizona, Mrs. Pearl C. Brackett, assistant superintendent of Community Schools for the Baltimore Public Schools, was elected to the Board of Directors for a two-year term of office.

Approximately 800 people attended this conference, the theme of which was "People Living, Learning, Being People." The four day conference featured such national speakers as the Honorable Vice Mayor Maynard Jackson of Atlanta, Georgia; Dr. Dean F. Berkley, director of Administrative Studies of the Indiana University, Bloomington, Indiana; Dr. Louis B. Mayhew, professor at Stanford University, Stanford, California.

Boston will fill its dumps and landfill areas next year; San Francisco's land fill area in Brisbane will be closed next year because residents object to it; Detroit's land fills are adequate for about three years; Philadelphia has almost filled its land fill areas. (Engineering-News Records 6/12/69)

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OUR CHRISTMAS TREAT

6 residents get $50 each for service

Housing Commissioner, Robert C. Embry, Jr., announced today that six public housing residents will each receive a certificate of merit and $50 in recognition of outstanding service to their community.

They are:

Mrs. Sara Causion, Latrobe Homes; Coleman D. Grant, Cherry Hill Homes; Warren Maxwell, Sr., Claremont; Mrs. Virginia Smith, Douglass Homes; William H. Edmonds, Lakeview Tower; Mrs. Catherine Quinlin, Brooklyn Homes.

Bishop Lord is recovering

United Methodist Bishop John Wesley Lord is recovering from surgery performed at Sibley Hospital in Washington on December 8, 1970.

Bishop Lord's condition is good and it is anticipated that he will be allowed to return to his residence for further recuperation in about two weeks.

The Bishop is president of the 10½ million member denomination's Council of Bishops and administrator of the Baltimore and Peninsula Annual Conferences, comprising United Methodist Churches in D.C., Md., Del., and a portion of W. Va.

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