

A Surprise in Dresden

Lyndon H. LaRouche, Jr. reviews a performance of Mozart's 'La Clemenza di Tito' by the Dresden Staatsoper, at the famed opera house in Dresden.

November 22, 2000

This past Sunday I was presented with a wonderful surprise, a magnificent performance by the Dresden Staatsoper, of one of Wolfgang Mozart's greatest, but rarely performed masterpieces, *La Clemenza di Tito*. In every respect, this performance itself was also a masterpiece in artistic work. I, like at least many among the others present, were stunned with joy by the superb quality of the direction, and by the brilliant performance by, among others, the mezzosoprano Sophie Koch, who performed the extremely challenging acting and singing role which Mozart had composed for the part of Sextus.

It was the kind of live musical experience which is but rarely to be heard still, anywhere, under today's rampant global moral and cultural decadence.

My Sunday events in Dresden were the result of being sandwiched between Saturday and Monday appointments, on science matters, scheduled to occur in the nearby, legendary city of Freiberg. Of that excursion to Freiberg, you shall hear much from me, in reports delivered at a later time. Friends arranged a Sunday morning walking tour in the famous, rebuilt section of Dresden, and presented me with seating for the evening event at the opera house, which both the eye and the ear attested to be among the world's greatest Classical opera houses.

As to the matter of the role performed by Sophie Koch, I can say without risk of exaggeration, that every aspiring mezzosoprano in the world would virtually eat her heart out to have the combined opportunity and developed capabilities for performing that operatic role, a leading role in what is one of the greatest operas ever composed. Overall, the musical director enjoyed a musically delicious selection of soloists and chorus, and, he made the best of the opportunity. The unusual degree of integrity and Classical-artistic fidelity of a performance which was free of the typical, fashionable corruption of most of today's performances of the repertoire, was visibly to the director's great credit.

As a final word on the subject of that performance itself, before turning to the subject of Mozart's opera itself, I should remind those familiar with my principal recently published writings, that *EIR* had just published (Nov. 17th) my report

on the subject of *Politics as Art*. In that publication, I had stressed those principles of artistic composition, Classical tragedy most emphatically, which define the way in which a great performance of a Classical drama, such as those of Shakespeare and Schiller, captures the imagination of the mind of the member of the audience. Great Classical opera, of which the compositions of Mozart, Beethoven, and Verdi are the most notable, follows the same principle.

La Clemenza di Tito is exceptionally well-crafted on this account; the Dresden performance realized precisely that intent, a performance so beautiful in both the nature of the work and the quality of performance, that it moved me to irresistible tears of joy on account of just that principle which I had presented to my readers in *Politics as Art*.

The paradox in the history of the performances of *La Clemenza di Tito*, is that its appearance on stage has been relatively rare, despite the powerful impact it had among the audiences during Mozart's remaining lifetime. Among Mozart's own operas, for example, it shares the same specific quality of power, as drama and musicality, as *Don Giovanni*, and touches the same kind of power associated with the famous soliloquy from Verdi's *Simon Boccanegra*. The otherwise curious treatment of a composition as great as *Clemenza* is, is reflected in part by the misrepresentations of it widespread in the usual musicological literature. In the libellous gossip of influential critics, the work is often wildly misrepresented and belittled on sundry accounts, accounts which prove to be fraudulent once one turns to the score itself, ignoring the relatively popular gossip on that subject.

Mozart and Moses Mendelssohn

The reasons for that belittling and defamation of the work have been purely political, from the time of Mozart's sudden death, shortly after the work had been first performed with huge public success. In fact, a significant ration of Mozart's political pro-American Revolution associates also died suspiciously during the same general interval of time. Why would the Austro-Hungarian secret police, who despite the silly gossip against Salieri, have remained the leading suspects to the present time, — why would they kill Mozart? The fact is that officials under Leopold II had been prompted to take the same kind of adversary interest in Mozart, which had later moti-



Lyndon LaRouche (third from left) visits the cathedral in Freiberg, Germany on Nov. 20, during a tour which also took him to the opera in nearby Dresden. The organist demonstrates the cathedral's large Silbermann organ.

vated the same secret police to deploy Schindler, for example, as a subsequently exposed spy against Ludwig van Beethoven.

The answer to such questions is to be found in the transition from that great Austrian Emperor Joseph II admired so greatly by both Mozart and Beethoven, to Joseph's successor, a different kettle of fish, Leopold II, the same Leopold II whose Chancellor, that ugly piece of work von Kaunitz, buried the Marquis de Lafayette alive in the dungeon at Olmütz, that as a favor to Britain's Prime Minister Pitt (the Pizzaro of Beethoven's opera on that matter, *Fidelio*). The political significance of Mozart's *La Clemenza di Tito*, is to be located most precisely, and conspicuously, in the deadly implications of that royal succession.

The Emperor Joseph II was unlike both his mother, Maria Theresa, and his successor, Leopold, alike. It is fair to say that, up to and after Joseph's death, Leopold had been Joseph's most dedicated political adversary. Mozart, like Beethoven, and like Joseph II, was an admirer of the great Benjamin Franklin, and of the American Revolution. Leopold's openly expressed motives in such matters were of an uglier hue.

The kinds of political differences which arise in Classical forms of art, are never of the quality we might associate with the use of the mere word "politics" to describe the still ongoing Presidential-election fiasco in the U.S. today. The only kind of politics which belongs within the domain of such art, is the politics of ideas bearing upon the task of defining the nature of mankind, as all of the great Classical Greek and modern tragedies do. That is the meaning we should all assign

to the use of the word "politics," when that concerns the motive and choice of subject-matter of Classical forms of artistic composition within the productions of globally extended European civilization since ancient Greece.

For example, for all Classical forms of artistic composition, the most important political division is between that art which expresses the notion of man and woman as made in the living image of the Creator of the universe, as opposed to the depraved notion of man of the behaviorists, for example, as simply another animal.

Among merely nominal Christians, the same quality of depravity which is otherwise expressed so openly and plainly by the behaviorists, is to be recognized under whatever disguises, Christian or other, it is encountered. Typically, it is met in such forms as the feudal tradition which treats the mass of humanity as virtually human cattle. That oligarchical view of man as virtually human cattle, denies fatally, as the practice of slavery does, the Christian doctrine which defines the nature of all men and women. So, Jesus Christ and his Apostles, such as John and Paul most notably, qualified the Mosaic doctrine of *Genesis* 1, as man and woman made in the living image of the Creator. The feudal legacy, in its Venetian form, is the standpoint of the variety of philosophical liberalism expressed by Leopold II. It is that view which prompts an oligarch of the specifically Venetian persuasion, such as Leopold, or the philosophical liberalism of the British monarchy, to a gut-passion of pure satanic hatred against a Joseph II or a Mozart.

All Classical art speaks directly to you, as an individual personality; it addresses the question each of us must ask

ourselves at some point in our lives, or perhaps even repeatedly, “Who am I, and what are we? Since we are all born, and shall die, what is the meaning of that individual existence we occupy between birth and death? What is the continuation of that life, even after we are dead?” Thus, great Classical art touches the same issues as Christianity and the themes of Judaism treated by the great Moses Mendelssohn. All allowable expressions of politics in Classical art, are limited to subject-matters of that quality, and of that importance to the person as an individual.

So, Mozart speaks to you personally, through *La Clemenza di Tito*, from the operatic stage.

That considered, what were Mozart’s politics, and how did that express itself in his music? Granted, he was a follower of the great Benjamin Franklin and sympathizer of the U.S. War of Independence. But, what were the more essential politics underneath those specific political attachments, the real politics as I have just defined that?

In the instance of *Clemenza*, the political subject is *agapē*, the same higher principle of natural law which is addressed by the Apostle Paul in *I Corinthians* 13, and by Plato in such famous locations as the quarrel over law among Socrates, Thrasymachus, and Glaucon in Plato’s *Republic*. On this account, Shakespeare, Schiller, Mozart, Beethoven, and the Verdi of *Va Pensiero*, exemplify art which touches that issue of law bearing upon the most fundamental of the distinctions between the view of man and woman as made in the living image of the Creator, and the contrasting, depraved notion of the behaviorists, of man as functionally another beast.

In *Clemenza*, Plato’s argument for a principle of *agapē*, is the point of controversy in law between the figure of the Praetorian Publius and the Emperor Titus who had undergone his own epiphany. It is the way in which Titus emerges from the crisis of the drama to proclaim a decision, premised upon *agapē* as a higher principle of law than any customary or legislated law, which brings to mind instantly the recollection of Paul’s *I Corinthians* 13.

That is the key to the deadly difference between the Emperor Joseph II and his depraved successor.

Art as Theology

Mozart does not preach,—he evokes the experience of the discovery of the principle of *agapē* within the cognitive experience of the individual member of the audience, by means of the unfolding, ironical development within the drama as a whole. Titus does not begin as a hero, either in the drama, or in the history of his role in the successful suppression of the Jewish revolt, in a war which the Romans had directed against both Christians and Jews since the time of Christ’s Crucifixion, and, more emphatically, as had all Roman emperors, beginning with the time of Nero. It is by the transformation of Titus, through the torment he suffers during the closing portion of the second and final act of the opera, that the conversion of Titus to a decision cohering with the

higher principle of *agapē*, is reproduced within the imagination of the individual member of the audience.

The audience does not learn about Titus’s decision; it knows that Titus’s decision is right, because the individual member of the audience has experienced, in his or her own, impassioned cognitive powers of imagination, the torment through which Titus on stage comes to that point. It is to the degree, that the performers and the directors of the opera command the efficient insight required to bestir the imagination to such effect, that a performance is to be judged better or worse.

In the history of Christianity, for example, it has been the similar re-experiencing of the Passion of Christ from Gethsemane through and beyond the Crucifixion, which has been the artistic quality of reliving that impassioned experience upon which the strength of Christianity has depended. There is perhaps no more conclusive demonstration of that, than is supplied by J.S. Bach’s *St. Matthew Passion*. Were today’s priests and parsons less given to dictating formulas, and less neglectful of that principle of artistic composition and performance, the parishes and pews of the actually Christian churches would not have been emptied to the degree this has typified the time since the assassination of President John F. Kennedy.

The source of the strength gained for Christianity, was never the sword or the sterile, Glaucon-like logic of the militant, but always lay where Paul located it in *I Corinthians* 13, in absolute certainty of knowledge of the highest principle of natural law, the principle of *agapē* presented to us by Plato, and as it is the pervasive hallmark of all true Christianity.

At the time of his death, and earlier, Mozart was essentially a leading Christian of his time, as his *Ave Verum Corpus* expresses this principle of Classical artistic composition with wonderful succinctness. Here lies the bond between the Emperor Joseph II and both Mozart and the Beethoven who composed a cantata on the death of Joseph.

Leopold was of a contrary disposition. There lies the political issue of his hostility to Mozart’s *La Clemenza*.

The key to understanding the connections involved in that case, is the name of Moses Mendelssohn, whose influence had prompted Joseph II to proclaim the emancipation of the Jews as law. It was the same circles of Moses Mendelssohn, among the defenders of the legacies of Gottfried Leibniz and J.S. Bach, in locations such as Leipzig, Berlin, and Vienna, who were among the closest associates of Mozart, Beethoven, and Franz Schubert, not only as a network of friends, but in respect to collaboration in the development of the practice of Classical musical composition during the lifetimes of these composers.¹ Joseph Haydn shared some of these same associ-

1. Cf. Steven Meyer, “Moses Mendelssohn and the Bach Tradition,” and David Shavin, “Philosophical Vignettes from the Political Life of Moses Mendelssohn,” *Fidelio*, Summer 1999.

ations, notably so during the reign of Joseph II. Nominal Catholic Leopold was of a contrary disposition.

During and throughout, and beyond, the second half of the Eighteenth Century, three figures of Germany led in one of the greatest periods of development of Classical artistic composition in the known history of mankind. These were the seminal figure of Göttingen University's Abraham Kästner, the teacher of Gotthold Lessing and Carl Gauss, among others, Lessing himself, and Lessing's close friend and collaborator Moses Mendelssohn. All of these were self-defined as followers of Leibniz and Bach, and the most efficient opponents of the Romantic school of the British and French Eighteenth-Century Enlightenment, which included such degraded figures as Leonhard Euler and Immanuel Kant. These three figures and their associates, founded the revival of a Greek Classical legacy, including Shakespeare, whose influence made possible the success of the U.S. War of Independence and the great florescence of Classical poetry, music, and drama, which we recognize today by such names as Goethe, Shelley, Schiller, Heine, Haydn, Mozart, Beethoven, Schubert, Mendelssohn, Schumann, Brahms, and Verdi.

It was through these circles, including the extended family of Moses Mendelssohn, that composers such as Mozart, Beethoven, and Schubert, were able to be published, performed, and to survive the enmity of those foes for as long as they did. One of the bitterest ironies of history, is that every great cultural accomplishment in Germany's art and science, from the second half of the Eighteenth Century, until Hitler, remains inseparable, still today, from the role of the German Jewry, especially the Jewish renaissance led by Moses Mendelssohn, in contributing greatly to those achievements. The same is true of the influence of Mendelssohn in the Jewish renaissance in eastern Europe. Indeed, Hitler's goals were to establish the reign of Romanticism in the footsteps of the evil Friedrich Nietzsche forever, by eradicating first the Jew and, later, the Christian, from the soil of not only a paganized Germany, but Europe as a whole. Hitler is dead, but the followers of Nietzsche and Richard Wagner, are still busily at work today.

The artistic issue underlying all such political matters, is the conflicts arising respecting the conception of the nature of the human individual in society. It is in that sense, that all the deeper issues of art are religious ones in principle, that in the same sense as Mozart's *La Clemenza*.

For myself, I prefer not to teach religion as such, unless circumstances compel me to do so, especially not to preach it. Here, I share a point of personal policy of practice, on which I am in agreement with Mendelssohn. As an international political figure, in Africa and in East and South Asia, and the Middle East, as in Europe and the Americas, I can be useful only as the ecumenical figure which my mission defines me to be in fact. Yes, I am a Christian as Mendelssohn remained

firmly an orthodox Jew to the end of his life; but, in the world at hand today, I must be, as Mendelssohn was, an ecumenical figure first and foremost, otherwise I can not perform the mission for which I am accountable today, and shall remain so long after I have died.

I thus view Classical art as Mozart, Beethoven, and others have taught me. It is from the greatest such artists that I have learned the greatest part of my politics, that in the same way that Mozart's *La Clemenza* serves as one of the great Christian sermons of modern times.

The Essence of Humanity

I should not conclude this without stating again the empirical grounds upon which we may be certain that individual human nature is as Christianity defines it, as man and woman made equally in the image of the Creator of the universe. As I have emphasized that, yet once again, in the referenced *Politics as Art*, the key to understanding the relevant distinctions, is provided by Plato's use of the celebrated allegory of the Cave in his *Republic*.

As I have made the argument in my referenced article, Classical art begins and ends within the bounds of the recognition, that the shadows which are cast on the walls of that cave known as sense-perception, are not reality, but only shadows of efficient principles which the senses can not see directly.

Thus, ignorant physical science insists, that the cause of an action lies within an assumed simple connection among the dots represented by those shadows. That scientific illiterate's game of "connect the dots" between physical phenomena, is the curse of the popularized notions of statistical consistency and mathematical physics generally today. That is the game of "connect the dots" which the founder of modern astrophysics, Johannes Kepler, denounced as the error of Ptolemy, Copernicus, and Tycho Brahe before him. It was upon the foundations supplied by Kepler, and such immediate predecessors as Leonardo da Vinci, that all competent modern science was developed.

Science relies upon the ability of the cultivated individual mind to discover the universal physical principles which are the actual cause for making the connections among the observed dots on the wall of Plato's Cave. These are principles which could never, by their nature, be observed by the senses; yet, we are able to prove the efficiency of their necessary existence by experimental methods associated with what the Nineteenth Century's Bernhard Riemann defines as the unique experimental standards for demonstrating that a discovered physical principle is no mere classroom demonstration, but, rather, a true universal principle. Thus, the existence of such principles is measurable, in terms of the senses, but the principles themselves are never to be seen directly by the senses.

It is the same in Classical artistic composition, as I have

stressed afresh in the referenced publication.

The means by which such discoveries in science occur, and are replicated as by students, is the recognition of a paradox of an ontological quality, as presented by the physical evidence at hand. In Classical art, irony and metaphor are the form in which such ontological paradoxes are presented, as Mozart exhibits this in *Clemenza*, for example.

The act of discovery provoked by such a paradox, occurs solely within the confines of the non-deductive cognitive processes of the cultivated individual human mind. The eruption of an insightful cognitive solution to such a paradox, if that solution is validatable experimentally, constitutes what Plato defines as an *idea*. The fact that such ideas prove to be efficient in effecting changes in nature, and in the behavior of persons in society, presents us with mental images which are beyond the power of the senses, and yet can be demonstrated to exist efficiently, by means of the way in which their use enables us to change the way in which the dots of sense-perception appear on the walls of Plato's Cave.

Thus, as I have stressed again in the referenced publication, the ideas of Classical art are imparted to the individual member of the audience, not by sense-perception as such, but by the effect of impelling the individual mind to create a stage in the domain of the cognitive powers of the imagination, to seek ideas in the same sense that a scientific paradox prompts a discoverer to seek out the idea of the relevant physical principle. Whether the discovery is an original one, or one re-created within the mind of the student, the essential character of both an original act of discovery and the later replication of that original experience, remains the same. This is the essential principle of the Classical humanist method in education, and the principle underlying the successful composition and performance of any form of Classical art.

In *Clemenza*, the audience experiences the moral depravity of Titus's Rome. At the outset, the personalities of the principal players express a poor quality of adolescent, even pathetically childish impulsiveness. It is plainly a society, a culture which lacks the moral fitness to survive. Lawfully, from this beginning, now planted within the cognitive imagination of the individual member of the audience, the development unfolds in the form of a self-aggravating paradox. The shallower-level interest which the opening establishes within the audience at the outset, becomes a deeper interest, as the lawfully unfolding developments become increasingly paradoxical, leading into the surging passion of the concluding portion of the second act.

At that juncture, the tormented mind of a visibly torn Titus, the former butcher of Judea, is transformed. Titus proclaims, after considering the matter before him, that this depravity must end now; rather than vengeful application of the cruel Roman law, the principle of *agapē* must be applied to the case before him, that the depravity of Roman society be thus transformed.

The acting at Dresden was magnificent to this effect. However, Mozart's music was essential. In this moment, as in the *Requiem* which Mozart was composing at that time, the revolution in composition which Mozart had made within the framework of Bach's principles of polyphony, nine years earlier, shone with full force, especially in the most crucial arias composed for the roles of Sextus and Vitellia, and in the use of the basset horn in conveying the impact of the most crucial cognitive moments in those arias.

The result: Mozart's *Die Zauberflöte*, composed during the same short interval, is great, but, as the popular saying of today goes, *La Clemenza di Tito* is "something else."

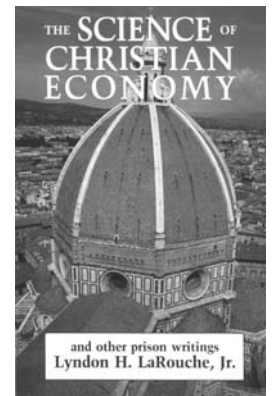
Such Classical art is indispensable for globally extended European civilization today, if nations such as the United States, are to be inspired to rise above that kind of general moral depravity, which exploded in the presently still ongoing election-crisis. Without sweeping and profound changes in the cultural habits acquired during the recent thirty-five years, the U.S. were not likely to outlive the effects of the global financial collapse now nearing its climax. Knowing what I know, and know perhaps far better than anyone in government in any part of the world, *Clemenza*, so performed, is essential spiritual medicine for all mankind, especially Europe and the Americas today.

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