

icymakers to persist in pretending otherwise—to indulge in myths of American innocence or fantasies about unlocking the secrets of history—is to increase the likelihood that the answers they come up with will be wrong. That way lies not just the demise of the

American empire but great danger for what used to be known as the American republic.”

Bacevich’s book is important for only one reason: As a naked pitch to destroy what remains of the American tradition, it is a useful target of exposure and

strong ridicule. His arguments are shallow, but they cannot be ignored—because they reflect an aggressive campaign by what Lyndon LaRouche has dubbed the “chickenhawks,” to destroy the United States from within.

—Jeffrey Steinberg

Beethoven’s *Fidelio*, the Inspiration for Fidelio Magazine

The first issue of this magazine, *Fidelio*, was published in 1991. I had just been released from Federal prison in October to a half-way house. I, along with Lyndon LaRouche and a number of his associates, although innocent, had been persecuted for our political convictions and had been imprisoned as political prisoners in the United States of America beginning Jan. 27, 1989. Lyndon LaRouche was still in prison at the time.

Fidelio magazine received its name from Beethoven’s only opera, and in my view, the greatest opera written by any composer thus far. When I named the magazine, I had in mind Lyndon LaRouche as Florestan, and his brave wife Helga Zepp LaRouche, who fought internationally for his freedom, as Leonora. As an associate of LaRouche, I also had in mind my own brave wife, Marianna, who had fought so valiantly both for Lyndon LaRouche’s freedom and for mine. In fact, while I was in prison, my wife and I exchanged over 90 letters under the pseudonyms Florestan and Leonora.

Beethoven’s opera is based on *Leonore*, a French opera by Pierre Gaveaux with libretto by Jean-Nicolas Bouilly, a French political figure who governed a prison at Touraine during the French Revolution. In his memoirs, Bouilly claimed that the events of his *Leonore* libretto were based on “a sublime act of heroism and devotion by one of the ladies of Touraine” as the Terror raged in France.

Donald Phau, another associate of Lyndon LaRouche who was a political prisoner, has pointed to the fact that the more likely inspiration for Bouilly, although it may have been politically difficult for him to say so at the time, was

the case of the Marquis de Lafayette, the famous French military leader who contributed to the success of the American Revolution and then returned to France to spread that revolution to Europe. Lafayette was forced to flee France with the advent of the British-orchestrated Jacobin terror and was imprisoned in Austria on orders of British Prime Minister William Pitt (the opera’s

Pizarro). His wife Adrienne worked tirelessly to free her husband, and even joined him in prison for two years. The couple was finally freed in 1797, the result of international pressure. Bouilly’s libretto was published in February 1798.

When this magazine was named *Fidelio*, it was thus an expression of our commitment to fight for the freedom of Lyndon LaRouche and his remaining associates still wrongfully imprisoned; it was an expression of our commitment to freedom and justice for all humanity; it was a celebration of what Lyndon LaRouche once referred to as the “Florestan principle,” Florestan’s commitment to the truth, regardless of personal consequences; and it was a celebration of the sublime beauty of a woman who, like Joan of Arc, acts heroically out of true married love, and more than that, out of love for all humanity.

In the opera, for those not familiar with the libretto, Florestan is impris-



Carol Pratt for The Washington Opera

Susan B. Anthony (right) as Leonora/*Fidelio* and Christopher Ventris (left) as Florestan, in *The Washington Opera production of Beethoven’s Fidelio*.

oned for telling the truth about his enemy, the tyrant Pizarro. His wife, Leonora, disguises herself as a young man named Fidelio, in order to gain access to the prison, where her husband is being

held. When Pizarro learns that the Governor is planning to inspect the prison and will uncover that Florestan, whom he believes to be dead, is being held there as a political prisoner, he decides to kill Florestan. Leonora, disguised as Fidelio, accompanies the jailer Rocco into the dungeon, where they dig her husband’s grave. When Pizarro enters the dungeon to kill Florestan, Fidelio/Leonora reveals that she is his wife (“Ich bin sein Weib”), as she fends off Pizarro at gunpoint. Pizarro flees and, with the arrival of the Governor, is taken into custody, and all the political prisoners, including Florestan, are freed.

The Washington Opera Performance

The Washington Opera performance of *Fidelio*, which I saw on May 19, was the first live performance I have witnessed. Since the Kennedy Center is being renovated, the performance took place at D.A.R. Constitution Hall,

where the acoustics, although improved, were still inadequate. The performance itself was musical-ly excellent, with some exceptions, in part owing to the acoustics. Especially beautiful were Leonora's "Abscheulicher! Wo eilst du hin?" aria by Susan B. Anthony; the prisoners' chorus "O Welche Lust, in freier Luft"; and the singing of Rocco by Eric Halfvarson.



Prison guards surround inmates in this modern-dress production.

Carol Pratt for The Washington Opera

The biggest problem with the performance was the fact that it was not performed in period costumes. As the director, Francesca Zambello, has reported, she and the costume designer, Anita Yavich, modelled the dress on that of Eastern European people during the 1950's, 1960's, and 1970's, with prisoners and captors in shades of gray, steel blue, khaki, and black. The prison guards, for example, were in uniforms based on those of the Nazis, Soviets, and Israelis.

In Zambello's words, "Writing 200 years ago, Beethoven addressed topics and emotions that last throughout the

ages. Is there anyone in the last few months especially who hasn't thought about the nature of heroes and villains, about good and evil? . . . The story is set in Seville, but might just as well be Colombia, Chechnya, or anywhere in the Middle East."

Because there is no orchestra pit at D.A.R. Constitution Hall, the orchestra played off stage, behind the facade of a prison wall. This perhaps contributed to the perceived need to stage exaggerated activity during the Overture and throughout the performance. This activity included guards walking down the aisles with German shepherd police dogs, and the breaking up of a demon-

stration in front of the prison, during which Florestan is arrested and Leonora left beaten on stage. This activity actually made it impossible to listen to Beethoven's music. Especially distracting, was the strip searching of three prisoners and their assassination off stage during a later scene.

Of course, the problem with such efforts to make a performance "relevant" to a modern audience is, that the original is already universal, based upon the principle of metaphor. The modernist staging, because it is literal, actually has the effect of destroying the metaphorical quality of the opera. The mind of the individual member of the audience is much more capable of grasping the universal implications of the opera, than a literal or symbolic staging, which actually limits the imagination.

On the other hand, the staging at the end of the opera was not as destructive, but had an opposite, positive effect, which was quite liberating. As the political prisoners were freed, they were greeted by their wives, and wave upon wave of children running down the aisles of the theater and onto the stage, to greet their liberated fathers.

The Sublime

From the very beginning of the opera, Beethoven makes it clear that, as was the case of LaRouche and his asso-

"There is a limit to the tyrant's power."



Selected writings of Friedrich Schiller, in English translation.

Volume I: *Don Carlos*, Essays, Poetry, and Epigrams. \$9.95

Volume II: *Wilhelm Tell*, Essays, and Poetry. \$15.00

Volume III: *The Virgin of Orleans*, Essays, Poetry, and Ballads. \$15.00

JUST
RELEASED

Volume IV: *Mary Stuart*, Essays, Poetry, Historical Essays,
and Early Writings \$15.00

Order from:

Ben Franklin Booksellers

P.O. Box 1707 Leesburg, VA 20177

1-800-453-4108 (toll-free) or 1-703-777-3661

Shipping and handling: \$4 for the first book, \$.50 for each additional book.

We accept MasterCard, Visa, Discover, American Express. Virginia residents add 4.5% sales tax.

www.benfranklinbooks.com e-mail: benfranklinbooks@mediasoft.net

ciates, Florestan is a political prisoner. After Rocco tells Leonora/Fidelio that one prisoner has been held for over two years. She responds, “Two years? He must be a great criminal.” Rocco responds: ‘Or he must have great enemies.’”

As stated above, the Prisoners’ Chorus was done beautifully. This had an especially powerful effect on me, because when first imprisoned in Alexandria, Va. on Jan. 27, 1989, it was months before we had any access to the open air, and of course years before we were free. It was precisely this Chorus that the Schiller Institute chorus performed on a number of occasions, as our associates were finally released from prison.

Leonora/Fidelio’s responsibility for letting the prisoners out of their dungeon, along with her comments upon first seeing Florestan in there, show that her love for justice for the oppressed is not limited to the case of her husband. When she first sees Florestan, she does not know if it is he. But her heart reaches out to the man, whoever he might be. She says: ‘Wer du auch seist, ich will dich retten’ (“Whoever you are, I will rescue you”).

The whole scene in the dungeon can only be described as sublime. Florestan, performed by Christopher Ventris, on the brink of death, sings the aria “Gott! Welch Dunkel hier!” (“God! What darkness is here!”), which aria reminds



Carol Pratt for The Washington Opera

Eric Halfvarson (left) as the jailer Rocco and Tom Fox (right) as Don Pizarro.

one both of Christ at Gethsemane, and of Beethoven’s own “Heiligenstadt Testament.” The idea content of this aria embodies what LaRouche, who himself cited Gethsemane at his sentencing on Jan. 27, 1989, refers to as the “Florestan Principle.” Despite the tribulations of his persecution, Florestan attests to the fact that God’s will is nevertheless just. As he says, his crime was, “Wahrheit wagt ich kuehn zu sagen, Und die Ketten sind mein Lohn” (“I dared to boldly tell the truth and chains are my reward”). Nonetheless, he willingly accepts the pain he suffers. He has done his duty.

This scene is perhaps the most pow-

erful in all opera. Rocco and Leonora/Fidelio are digging Florestan’s grave in preparation for the entrance of Pizarro, who intends to kill him. And in this very moment, Leonora/Fidelio, like the angel Florestan senses to be in his presence, offers Florestan, the man who is about to be murdered, both bread and wine. There is no priest present, there is only the angel, Leonora, his wife.

When you see this scene, look at it from the standpoint of someone who has experienced true married love. Look at it from the standpoint of someone like Florestan, who has been persecuted for having told the truth boldly. Look at it from the standpoint of someone who has actually buried his or her spouse. Look at it from the standpoint of someone who has sought justice for his or her spouse, and for humanity as a whole. And then hear the duet “O Namenlose Freude” (“O Nameless Love”), sung by Leonora and Florestan after she has saved him from the tyrant’s dagger. And then live your life accordingly.

—William F. Wertz, Jr.

Bangalore: ‘Toward a New World Order’

Continued from page 5

strate that the international order is becoming less aligned. This opens new opportunities to strengthen the process and build a more cooperative International Order. What we need is a new community of nation-states, non-aligned in military terms, but aligned against all forms of political, social, and economic injustice, and a global movement to pursue a new, just political-economical order.

The people of Iraq, already living

under severely adverse conditions for years, have suffered immensely from the war, and its longer-term effects are still not clear. Administration in the country has completely broken down and little or nothing has been done by the occupying powers to control widespread lawlessness, criminal activity, looting, and killings, with pervasive insecurity, leading to phenomenal humanitarian hardships and challenges. There is an urgent need for all countries and humanitarian assistance

to rebuild a shattered society. Above all, a government of the Iraqi people must assume full powers for the governance of Iraq at the earliest. *Regardless of the event leading to the war, this must now constitute the highest priority for the world and the U.N.*

The conference called upon the peace-loving people, especially young men and women, to launch a worldwide movement to achieve the above goal.

The conference declared Bangalore the “City of Peace and Harmony.”