Roulades and Cadenzas

Summing up l'affaire Anderson, in which a great artist was exploited in the Negro struggle for equality

by CARLETON SMITH

*MUSIC*

Periodically, and, of late, more and more frequently, music is agitated by non-musical elements. Today in our country, the art is being used to disseminate propaganda, and artists are manipulated as if they were political puppets.

The most publicized disturbance since Wilhelm Furtwängler gave up his contract with the New York Philharmonic Society, after its Board of Directors had selected him as the best qualified conductor to succeed Toscanini, is l'affaire Anderson. Here, an indubitably great musician was used as a pawn in the Negroes' struggle for racial equality.

In case you read only the headlines, and for the record, here is a brief statement of the facts as compiled by Miss Anderson's manager, Sol Hurok, commented on in italics by the Daughters of the American Revolution.

Howard University, Washington, D.C., obtains from S. Hurok, the privilege of presenting the world-renowned Negro contralto, in a recital in that city.

January 5th, 1939

Charles C. Cohen, Chairman of the Howard University Concert Series, applies to Constitution Hall for the purpose of reserving the Hall for a performance on April 9th. He is informed by Fred E. Hand, manager of the Hall, that they had been booked a year in advance by the National Symphony Orchestra for a concert on that date, that a clause in the rental contract prohibits the presentation of Negro artists. Constitution Hall is owned, tax-free, by the Daughters of the American Revolution. Constitution Hall is not tax exempt.

January 12th, 1939

Mr. V. D. Johnston, Treasurer of Howard University, writes in an open letter: "The question arises whether to impress upon the D. A. R. that this restriction may not represent public opinion in Washington."

January 15th, 1939

The Washington Herald comments on Constitution Hall: "It stands almost in the shadow of the Lincoln Memorial, but the Great Emancipator's sentiments about race, creed or previous condition, of servitude are not shared by the Daughters, for contracts of a commercial nature, the use of these halls contains a clause banning any member of the Negro race. Prejudice rules to make the Capital of the Nation ridiculous in the eyes of all cultured people and to comfort Fuehrer Hitler and the members of our Nazbund."

January 18th, 1939

Chairman Cohen represents Howard University to S. Hurok: "I am writing to you of our difficulty in securing an auditorium for Miss Marian Anderson who is to sing for us on April 9th."

January 22nd, 1939

S. Hurok to Fred Hand, Manager of Constitution Hall: "Without attempting to discuss the justification of such a policy, we are asking whether you would waive that restriction in the case of Miss Anderson. It need not be pointed out to you, we hope, that Marian Anderson is one of the greatest living singers, and the application of such a restriction would be to deny a great musical experience to the people of your city, since it is impossible to present her in any other hall in Washington. Would you, or a possible board of managers whom you might represent, take up this request as soon as possible and advise us of your decision?"

January 29th, 1939

Mr. Hand to Mr. Hurok: "I beg to advise you that Constitution Hall is not available on April 9th, 1939, because of prior commitments. In the matter of policy under which Constitution Hall operates, I would recommend that you address a letter to Mrs. Mary B. Robert, Jr., President General of the National Society, D. A. R."

January 27th, 1939

Mr. Hurok to Mrs. H. M. Robert, Jr.: "The cultured people of America would be gravely offended by your decision to exercise the restriction above-mentioned. This answer is the only communication received from Mr. Hurok on the subject. He had only reason was for April 9th, no other date was asked for by him."

January 30th, 1939

Kirsten Flagstad, soprano of the Metropolitan Opera, wire the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People saying: "As a foreigner in America, I have always been impressed by the freedom and democracy in this country. I therefore am greatly surprised to learn from you that the use of Constitution Hall in Washington has been refused for a concert to my fellow-artist, Marian Anderson."

Lawrence Tibbett, Metropolitan star and President of the American Guild of Musical Artists to the same organization: "Surely the Daughters of the D. A. R., who fought for the establishment of this great democracy would not wish to perpetuate such an obviously undemocratic and un-American rule as one which bars the appearances of any artist of whatever race, creed or color."

February 1st, 1939

The National Board of the D. A. R. met and discussed the question. Seven years ago, on March 22, 1932, they had adopted rules prohibiting the use of their hall to other than white artists or adveces of their manager, who said the "best" halls and theatres in Washington do not rent to Negro groups. Miss Anderson's concert was sponsored by Howard University and by a bullot vote of 50 to 1, the Board voted to maintain its rule. At that time, however, no other date had been requested except April 9th.

February 3rd, 1939

Mrs. H. M. Robert, Jr., replies to Mr. Hurok: "At the time that the Chairman of the Howard University Concert Series approached the Manager of Constitution Hall, the Hall had already been engaged for Sunday, April 9th, by another musical organization."

February 7th, 1939

Mr. Hurok receives advise that Constitution Hall is available for a concert by Ignace Jan Paderewski. The open dates are April 1st, 3rd, 4th, 6th, 8th, 10th, 13th, 17th and 25th. He wire Chairman Cohen: "Am informed Constitution Hall available April 8th and 10th. Take steps immediately to book Anderson either date."

February 13th, 1939

Mrs. H. M. Robert, Jr., sends a circular letter to State Regents saying, among other things: "The rules governing the use of Constitution Hall are in accordance with the policy of theatres, auditoriums, hotels and public schools of the District of Columbia."

February 15th, 1939

Hall Manager Hand to Chairman Cohen: "The Hall is not available for a concert by Miss Anderson."

February 18th, 1939

Giuseppe Boghetti, Miss Anderson's teacher for nearly 20 years, says: "I had thought that kind of race prejudice was a thing of the past in this country. Coming at a time like this when prejudice and bigotry are rampant in other parts of the world, the action in Washington is particularly unfortunate. Mrs. Boghetti, who is a member of the D. A. R., is entirely sympathetic with my feelings in the matter, and is resigning from the organization."

February 20th, 1939

The Board of Education of the District of Columbia, Dr. F. W. Ballou, Superintendent of Schools, refuses to permit the use of the Continued on page 167
Floradora
Juice 1/4 Lime
1/2 teaspoon Sugar
1/2 pony Raspberry Syrup
1 Jigger Gin
Frappe, stir with ginger ale and serve in Tom Collins Glass

White of one Egg
3/4 jigger Jamaica Rum
3/4 jigger Port Wine
Ice, shake, serve in eight-ounce glass, fill up with soda

Fren Silver
 Juice 1/4 Lemon
3/4 spoon Sugar
2/3 Tom Gin
3/4 Jamaica Rum
3/4 spoon Milk
Ice, shake and serve in tall glass, fill up with soda

Roulades and Cadenzas

High School auditorium for a recital by Miss Anderson.
February 20th, 1939

Jascha Heifetz, famed violinist, after his concert at Constitution Hall, in New York, was bitten by a mosquito and he had to leave the stage, reported: "I had a terrible time playing this afternoon. I had to leave the stage and continue playing because I was too hot."

The Board of Education is pleased by the Marian Anderson Committee, a group of prominent personalities and members of the Board of Education, to announce the following:

- The appointment of Miss Anderson as the new superintendent of schools.
- The appointment of Mr. Roosevelt as the new principal of the High School auditorium.
- The appointment of Mr. Roosevelt as the new principal of the High School auditorium.

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attached.” The Superintendent of Schools of the District of Columbia promptly telegraphed the offer and made the auditorium “unavailable.”

On March 29th, James P. McGeorge became member of the House of Representatives from Miss Anderson’s district in Philadelphia, introduced a resolution in Congress asking for an investigation of the District of Columbia Board of Education.

The next day Secretary of the Interior Harold L. Ickes granted personal permission to Marian Anderson to sing Easter Sunday on the steps of the Lincoln Memorial, saying: “This seems to me to be a good use of the public facilities.”

Prominent politicians were announced as „sponsors” of the concert. On Good Friday, Allen J. Ellender, Democratic Senator from Louisiana, attacked Secretary Ickes for “setting a bad precedent,” and criticized the manager of Federal buildings for ordering all available building guards on duty to prevent the concert.

On Easter Sunday Marian Anderson sang for an estimated audience of 75,000 on the steps of the Lincoln Memorial. She sang with My Country, ‘Tis of Thee and ended with Nobody Knows the Trouble We Seen.

The next day Miss Anderson returned to Philadelphia, was feted at a reception that had aspects of a political rally. Preceded by a Pennsylvania State Railroad Band, many things were said that had little to do with music. One speaker sang out a certain Washington official who had been invited and who didn’t attend. The nation’s concert— and shouted to the crowd: “We’ll remember you, Mr. X—!”

In Washington, Mrs. Roosevelt stated Miss Anderson would probably be invited to sing for the King and Queen of England. On April 13th, Miss Anderson sang a recital in her home-town—the first ever to be sold out. On April 16th, she appeared at Carnegie Hall with a police squad on guard and had her first ride in the “Mayor’s car.”

In all this, the real issue is not very clear. Republicans accused Mrs. Roosevelt of vote-getting. Time magazine said: “To appease the Negro voters, Mrs. Roosevelt also contributed ... promised to appear this summer on a program in behalf of Miss Anderson in Richmond, Va.” Rival impresarios intimated Manager Hurlock didn’t want an auditorium, that he purposely maneuvered to get the open-air concert and resultant publicity for himself. Mr. Hurlock called the D.A.R. “Fascists.” The Christian Defenders of American Heritage passed out a scurrilous pamphlet to patrons of the Monte Carlo Ball (managed by Sol Hurok), stating: “The use of a great artist, as the instrumentality for bringing in the race issue through the colored people is most reprehensible and reeks of communist hypocrisy.”

There is certainly more in l’amour than that appears on the surface. It was not merely a matter of finding a hall for Miss Anderson in Philadelphia. Nor were the D.A.R. alone to blame. The Lincoln Theater, belonging to the Negroes, has a capacity of 1,800—equal to that of the white high school auditorium. It could have been used, but the sponsors wanted the concert elsewhere. They saw a good opportunity to force the issue of racial equality. Washington ground hogs heard in the distance the firm voice of Walter White, secretary of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People.

The D.A.R. pointed out that not only did the District of Columbia Board of Education refuse Harvard University but also the Belasco, the National, and Loew’s Capitol theatres were asked for and were “not available.” Negroes in the city have said that Mary Pickford and Rudolph Valentino have said they would like to sing there. “This proves,” said Mrs. Robert, Jr., “that our decision was rooted in District of Columbia customs. An exception would have been in violation of signed agreements for all similar properties in Washington.”

The fact is: Negroes and whites are not treated alike in our national capital. Nor are they throughout the nation. The best New York hotels refuse to accept Marian Anderson as a guest. For years she went to a Harlem Y. W. C. A., after her New York recitals. Now she stays at the liberal and literati-protected Algonquin. In other cities it is said she has had to use the freight elevator to get to her room. She is not wanted in any hotel dining room. She does not eat in any Pullman diner in the North or the South. She is a Negro... and must be segregated, for, let us admit it, we have never accorded social equality to the Negroes.

Music is one of the supreme creations of man. It should be preserved as a sanctuary above the jealousies and strife of individual, racial, and national hatreds. This fact needs constant reiteration: for if we are not aware, we will soon be persuaded that because Mussolini bombs the Albanians we should not listen to Verdi or Enrico Puccini, because we hate Hitler, we must ban the music of Richard Strauss, as we have banned Furtwängler.

The most reassuring fact... and to lovers of music the most important... is that through this scandal, Marian Anderson kept her composure and her integrity. No matter what was done to her and for her, her work and her humility and her art remained intact and untouched. Would that we were as wise as she and used music as she does to cross frontiers of hatred, to rise above misunderstanding and prejudice... in short, to gain entrance to that unparalleled land of beauty and love and equality.

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