

Thursday, September 13, 1979

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Sharon Daniels (left), principal soprano at the New York City Opera, and Linda Michele (right), Los Angeles-based opera and musical comedy star, alternate as Rosabella in the revival of Frank Loesser's "The Most Happy Fella." Ms. Michele sings the matinee performances. Jo

Sullivan, who later became Mrs. Frank Loesser (center), was the original Rosabella. Nine performances of the new, expanded production are being presented at Detroit's Music Hall.

Opera's happiest parents travel with baby daughter

By ETHEL SIMMONS

Opera stars Sharon Daniels and Dan Sullivan keep their marriage together traveling as a family, with 14-month-old baby daughter Megan.

"It's not a lot of fun," Ms. Daniels admitted when asked what it's like being a mother on the road.

This time, however, the couple has brought along a babysitter, Stephanie, and "it's getting easier. Megan is an amazing little creature. She travels much better than we do."

"It's difficult to organize our travel, but she lightens our life for us. You trade one for the other. I was single a long time, and I'm learning new work habits," the pretty, soft-spoken performer declared.

NEW YORK CITY Opera principal soprano Sharon Daniels is starring as Rosabella, the mail-order bride in the Michigan Opera Theatre (MOT) production of "The Most Happy Fella," through Sunday at the Music Hall Center in Detroit.

"The Most Happy Fella" tells the story of a love affair between Rosabella, a waitress in San Francisco, and Tony, a vineyard owner in the Napa Valley.

"It's a very tender love story about

two people, who don't know each other, developing their love for each other," Ms. Daniels said.

Metropolitan Opera baritone Giorgio Tozzi (the voice of Rosanno Brazzi in "South Pacific") heads the cast as the aging Tony. Another American baritone, Frederick Burchinal, alternates in the role of Tony. Linda Michele alternates as Rosabella.

Ms. Daniels' husband Dan Sullivan (billed as Dan O'Sullivan) is appearing in the production as the postman and also in the chorus.

"THE ENSEMBLE sounds so fantastic," Ms. Daniels said Friday afternoon, shortly after the company arrived in Detroit from New York where they had been rehearsing.

"It's just chilling. I don't know when I've heard a choir sing so well. My husband also is singing in the ensemble, with his big solo voice down in the bass section."

This revival of Frank Loesser's "The Most Happy Fella" is in its pre-Broadway run at the Music Hall, and before the show closes in Detroit the Sunday matinee will be filmed by WNET for national broadcasting next year. (The first MOT production to be taped for national television was "The Tender Land.")

"We always try to have one of us not working. It's difficult. One of us is usually working on a role."

—Sharon Daniels-Sullivan

The original production of "The Most Happy Fella" won the Drama Critics Award for best musical in 1956. Hit songs from the opera include "Standing on the Corner," "Big D" and "Joey, Joey, Joey."

"My Heart Is So Full of You" is one of the songs Ms. Daniels sings, as a duet.

"I JUST LOVE being in it," she said with warmth. "I think the reason I love this so much, it's a story of what love can do in people's lives in a positive way."

"We've been afraid to say 'I love you' for so long, people are ready to say it."

Ms. Daniels, who is originally from Phoenix, and her husband, from Eureka, Ill., met in the cast of "La Boheme" in Tucson. They portrayed a pair of lovers, Musetta and Marcello.

Their attraction was "very strong. In

a working situation people's strengths and weaknesses come out," she said.

"It isn't often we get to perform in the same production," Ms. Daniels continued. "It's limiting to a company to try to sell us as a team."

ONE SEASON they both sang in Kansas City, but she was in two shows and he was in two others.

"We generally try to travel together, for the sake of the relationship," she said. "We travel as a family."

The couple, who have been married four years, try not to spend more than a few weeks apart. This summer they appeared together in "The Marriage of Figaro" in California.

"We always try to have one of us not working," Ms. Daniels said, talking about their travel arrangements. "It's difficult. One of us is usually working on a role."

Celebrities meet with audience

Meeting the celebrity speaker at a luncheon that follows each lecture is an option available to season-ticket holders for the Birmingham Town Hall series.

The 1979-80 season will begin Oct. 18 with Rex Reed, the celebrity most consistently requested by Birmingham Town Hall audiences, making his first appearance at the lecture series.

Movie critic Reed will review the Hollywood scene in his talk entitled "Rex Reed at the Movies." Time magazine has hailed him as "the most entertaining new journalist in American since Tom Wolfe."

His syndicated column is carried by more than 400 newspapers coast-to-coast, and his articles are read by additional millions in such publications as Esquire, Holiday, Cosmopolitan, Harper's Bazaar and the New York Times.

OTHER SPEAKERS in the Birmingham Town Hall series will be Thomas Hoving, director of the Metropolitan Museum of Art from 1967-77, on Nov. 15; Comtesse dte Romanones, an all-American girl who is active in cultural,

business and social life all over the world, on Jan. 17; Dr. Barbara Brown, pioneer researcher in the world of feedback, Feb. 21; and Bob Wright, Broadway and television star, March 30.

As director of the Metropolitan Museum of Art, Thomas Hoving was instrumental in negotiating with the Egyptian Government the current tour of the "Treasures of Tutankhamen."

Hoving is the author of the best seller "Tutankhamen — The Untold Story." In his talk at Town Hall, Hoving will shed new light on the discovery and the discoverer.

Comtesse de Romanones became a secret agent assigned to Spain in World War II and married into one of that country's most noble and famous families. Her topic will be "An American in Spain."

DR. BARBARA BROWN will explore the possible benefits of biofeedback in relieving both mental and physical distress. Dr. Brown is chief of experimental physiology at the Veterans Administration Hospital in Sepulveda.

(Continued on page 5D)



Rex Reed will talk about the movies, as the season's opening Birmingham Town Hall speaker.

Weekend

IN THE SUBURBS

- **Nightcap with Mozart** — weekly midnight chamber music concert in informal setting presented by Renaissance Concerts, Inc., at 11:30 p.m.-12:15 a.m. every Friday at Birmingham Unitarian Church in Bloomfield Hills. Refreshments at 11 p.m. Faith Foster, soprano; Douglas Cornelien, recorder, and David Wilson, harpsichord, on Sept. 14. Information at 851-8934.
- **Comedy Castle** — Jack Marion, from L.A.'s "Comedy Store" and "Improvisation," Thursday-Saturday, Sept. 13-15, at Fridays in Pine Lake Mall, West Bloomfield. Showtime Thursday, one continuous show 9 p.m.-1:30 a.m.; Friday and Saturday 8:30 and 11 p.m. Information and reservations at 851-3252.
- **The Phantom** — original musical based on classic film "The Phantom of the Opera" presented Friday-Sunday, Sept. 14-16, 21-23 at Barn Theatre on Oakland University campus near Rochester. Special 99-cent matinees on Sept. 16 and 23 at 2:30 p.m. Friday and Saturday curtains at 8:30 p.m.; with 6:30 shows on Sundays. Information at 377-2000.
- **Angle's** — presents big band sound of the Dick Murphy Big Band, 9 p.m.-midnight Sundays in Farmington Hills. Cover charge.
- **Good Time Revue** — musical memory presented by Jimmy Launce Productions, Inc., through Sept. 29 at Somerset Dinner Theatre, Troy. Songs from an age of innocence sung and danced by three guys and three gals. Performances Fridays and Saturdays, with buffet by Alfred's Restaurant served at 7:30 p.m., show at 8:45. Reservations at 643-8865.
- **Cripple Creek Sandwich Theater** — presents "Night After Art in the Park" with Gail Smith, guitar, dulcimer, harmonica, country rock, at 8 p.m. Sunday, Sept. 16, at Common Ground in Birmingham.

IN DETROIT

- **ANCIENT MOON FESTIVAL OF CHINA** — celebrated in Detroit's Chinatown at Cass and Peterboro. Two-day gala street fair, Saturday-Sunday, Sept. 15-16. Hours 11 a.m.-7 p.m. Saturday, noon-7 p.m. Sunday. Co-sponsored by International Institute of Metropolitan Detroit.
- **DEATHTRAP** — Ira Levin's comedy/thriller starring Brian Bedford through Oct. 6 at the Fisher Theater. Ticket information at 872-1000.
- **ARAB WORLD** — ethnic festival Friday-Sunday, Sept. 14-16, at Hart Plaza downtown. Hours 6-11 p.m. Friday, noon-11 p.m. Saturday, Sunday.
- **THE PEDDLER'S PARADE** — Detroit premiere of jazz opera written by Detroit Michael Szymanski and performed by Detroiters. Performances through Sept. 30. Curtain time 8 p.m. every Friday-Sunday. For more information call 964-7380.
- **RENAISSANCE EVENING IN CASS CORRIDOR** — featuring music, dance, an award presentation and address by U.S. Solicitor Gen. Wade H. McCree Jr., themed to rebirth of a city, at 7 p.m. Sunday, Sept. 16, at Orchestra Hall, 3711 Woodward. Ticket in Sponsored by First Unitarian-Universalist Church of Detroit and the Concerned Citizens of Cass Corridor. Ticket information by calling the church, 833-9107, or at Hudson's Northland, Fairlane and Eastland malls.
- **LONDON CHOP HOUSE** — Bobby Laurel and Suburban Renewal play for listening and dancing Monday-Saturday. Call 962-0278.
- **CAUCUS CLUB** — Bess Bonnier on piano and Joe Lo Duca on guitar alternate nights Tuesday-Saturday, through Oct. 13. For more information call 965-4970 from 10 a.m.-9 p.m. Monday-Saturday.

Intermission

Readers write, Turn down sound

Loud music definitely turns people off, according to readers who responded to the recent Observer and Eccentric Intermission poll. The question we asked was:

DOES THE VOLUME LEVEL OF MUSIC IN SOME BARS AND NIGHTCLUBS IRRITATE YOU? DO YOU FIND CONVERSATION DIFFICULT UNDER SUCH CIRCUMSTANCES? DO YOU THINK "CANNED" MUSIC SHOULD BE PLAYED BETWEEN SETS?

Lois Kaupa of Birmingham wrote, "Music, Music. Why do bands think loudness substitutes for quality music? Conversation is impossible except for break time. What a way to meet new people or talk to those you haven't seen in years!"

"Music at a reception, dinner dance or nightclub should be part of the entertainment but not the whole show for the whole evening."

"If a band was really good, it could play very softly and people would try to listen. I hope your opinion poll could be forwarded to the musicians' union. They must be all deaf by now."

Editor's Note: We will forward the mail responses to the musicians' union.

P. B. Hoppel of Bloomfield Hills commented, "Music, not only in bars and many restaurants, is too loud but even in many stores it is a grating irritation. What is wrong with music soft and quiet, even rock and roll?"

M. S. of Troy also thinks the music is annoying. "Yes, Yes, Yes! It's everywhere! In dentist's offices, restaurants, everywhere! Even the so-called 'nice' music is played too loud; it's hard to carry on a conversation in a restaurant. Many times we've moved because we were sitting near a speaker."

"As far as bars are concerned, the audio level is absolutely ridiculous!"

Reba Platzek of Bloomfield Hills declared, "I definitely find the noise level intolerable. We do not frequently night clubs but do go into bars for a drink. Why not include restaurants in your survey? We (my husband, friends and I) resent loud music that interferes with conversation and especially resent having rock music imposed everywhere."

Bad Kreifeldt of Birmingham replied to an earlier Intermission question which asked, **DO YOU THINK THE QUALITY OF TELEVISION PROGRAMMING HAS DECLINED IN RECENT YEARS? IF SO, DO YOU WATCH LESS TV BECAUSE OF THIS?**

Other readers, whose responses were reprinted earlier, said they thought television programming was generally less appealing. But Kreifeldt had kind words to say.

"No. May watch less TV, but not because of quality. Better series ('Roots,' 'Hill Country'). More sports and better representation. Pay-TV adds a new dimension."

Another Intermission question will be asked next Thursday.