

Vickers humanizes 'Grimes'

By Mary Jane Doerr
special writer

Is Jon Vickers Peter Grimes or is Peter Grimes Jon Vickers? So intermeshed is the famous Canadian tenor's characterization of Benjamin Britten's hapless fisherman, that after 17 years of portraying the part, Vickers is virtually inseparable from Peter Grimes. This is ironic since Britten preferred to have the part sung by a lighter voice than a heldentenor.

In the opening night performance of Met Weck, Vickers' performance was matchless. His every move, every motion gave his pitiful character sympathy and understanding.

It was the final scene that brought the meaning of the opera to light. Grimes had been accused of murdering his apprentice on a fishing trip. A second child had died and Grimes had gone mad.

In this touching act, Vickers is finally able to evoke sympathy for his Grimes. Up to that point in the opera, feelings were with the townspeople who accused Grimes of murder.

Perhaps it is the original character of George Crabbe that looms out of Montagu Slater's libretto that makes us believe Grimes is guilty. Britten softened that personality in Grimes and made the evidence circumstantial. Britten's intention was to make the townspeople the antagonist and Grimes the innocent victim though this idea never really comes off, a major weakness in the opera itself.

WHERE did his apprentice get his bruises and torn shirt?

If Britten's opera Grimes is a weak

character, he is also an angry one. He turns that anger on his two would-be friends, Captain Balstrode, masterfully portrayed by Thomas Stewart, and Ellen Orford, whom Johanna Meier portrayed in a kinder manner than in the original version.

The most serious weakness in the opera is the non-communication between Ellen and Grimes. They are supposed to be in love and intending to marry and yet Britten gives no interaction between the two leads to give us any knowledge of that love.

Meier, though uneven in her singing is a sympathetic, kindly person who would be able to interact with an insane person. Without any contact, though, between the two until the final scene, the observer is left wondering if Ellen is as mad as Grimes.

It is Vickers' acting in the final scene that has brought him worldwide acclaim for this role. Here he humanizes Grimes and makes a touching motion toward Ellen before he follows the old captain's advice and heads out to sea to drown himself before the townspeople find him. It is one of the most moving scenes in all opera.

THE ORCHESTRA, under conductor David Atherton, was superb with the wonderful orchestration of Britten. In this opera, the Met chorus has one of its finest roles.

The ageless Jerome Hines is a proper judge as Swallow. Robert Nagy's penetrating Bob Boles, the Methodist fisherman, carefully gave an absurd religious meaning to the plot.

The 1987 sets of Tyrone Guthrie present the same crowded stage so effective in the original Sadler Wells premiere in 1945.

Bonsai exhibit

The Four Seasons Bonsai Club is holding its annual bonsai exhibit at Summit Place, Elizabeth Lake and Telegraph roads, Pontiac through Sunday.

Bonsai experts are giving lectures at 7 p.m. through Friday. A series of slide presentations is planned for 2 p.m. through Saturday and at 4 p.m. Sunday.

To accentuate the Oriental atmosphere, origami (Japanese paper folding) demonstrations are scheduled for 3 p.m. Thursday and Friday, 1 and 3 p.m. Saturday and 3 p.m. Sunday.

Japanese koto music is planned for 3 p.m. Sunday and displays of oriental artwork and kites may be seen throughout the exhibit.



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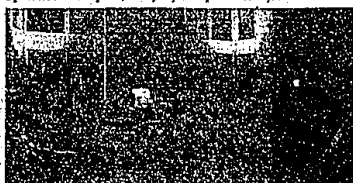
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The Bloomfield Hills Board of Education will receive sealed bids for the purchase of an undeveloped 14.94 acre parcel of land located in Bloomfield Township, Michigan, south of the 14th in the Hills Church, (Double Site).

Copies of the specifications, instructions to bidders, and general forms can be obtained at the Business Office, Bloomfield Hills Schools, 4300 Anderson Road, Bloomfield Hills, Michigan 48301, (313) 650-9100. All descriptive information contained therein is based on sources which are believed to be accurate, but the accuracy thereof is not warranted or guaranteed.

Your proposal marked "BIDDER PROPERTY BID" may be delivered to the Bloomfield Hills Schools Business Office, 4300 Anderson Road, Bloomfield Hills, Michigan, but must be delivered no later than 5:00 p.m. E.D.T., Tuesday, June 19, 1984; to the regularly scheduled meeting of the Board of Education, Bloomfield Hills School Media Center, 4300 Anderson Road, Bloomfield Hills, Michigan, at which time all bids will be opened and read aloud.

Proposals must be submitted on the proposal form furnished and shall be made in full conformity with all of the minimum requirements and conditions as set forth in the specifications. All proposals shall remain firm for a period of 60 days from the date the proposals are opened.

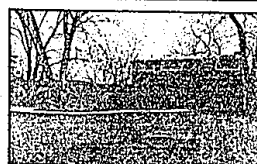
The Board of Education reserves the right to accept or reject any and all bids and to waive any informality or irregularities therein.

Baron A. Thorp, Secretary
Bloomfield Hills Board of Education

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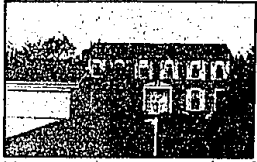
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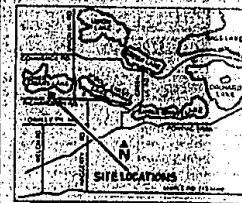


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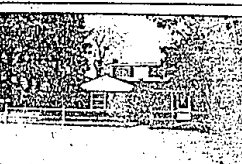
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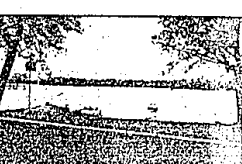


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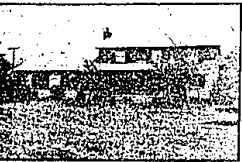
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