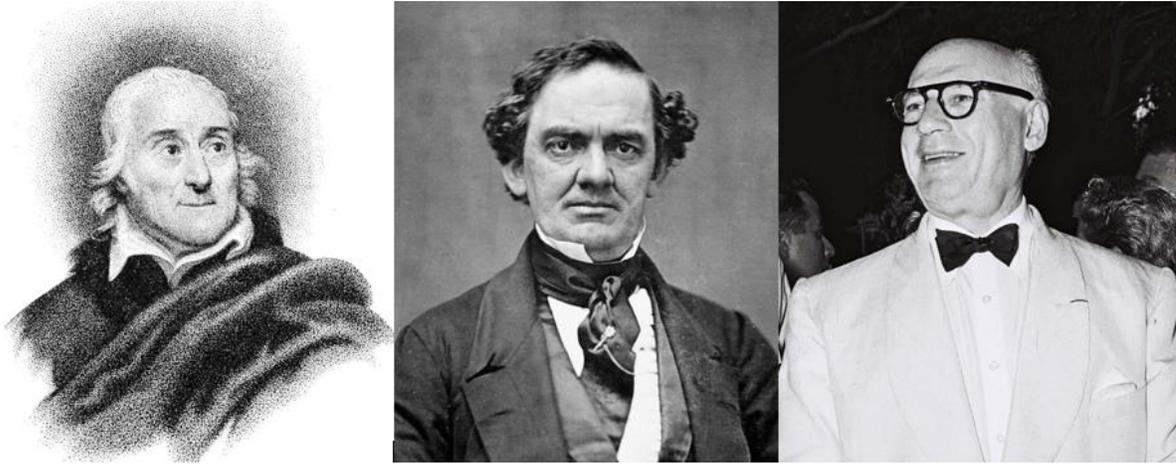


LITERARY CLUB OF CINCINNATI

# THE MAN BEHIND THE CURTAIN

by Christopher Milligan



American impresarios: Lorenzo Da Ponte, P.T. Barnum, and Sol Hurok.

One of the more amusing traditions of our Literary Club is the secrecy of paper topics: the title of the paper is published, but the topic itself isn't revealed until the paper is read.

The title of my talk, "The Man Behind the Curtain," could suggest numerous subjects. Stalin behind the impenetrable Iron Curtain? Or Polonius, father to Ophelia, eavesdropping behind a tapestry? Or perhaps the American painter Charles Willson Peale whose self-portrait depicts him, pulling back a heavy-looking red curtain to reveal a gallery of paintings. Or is it the Great and Powerful Oz who is revealed when Toto pulls back the curtain, and who exclaims, "Pay no attention to the man behind the curtain!"

In fact, my topic—my "man behind the curtain"—is the one who

plans musical performances, who hires the soloist, decides on the program, and who risks his or her own reputation, if not also his capital, on the venture. In the world of popular music, the role is known as the promoter. In Hollywood, it's the producer. And in the classical music world, at least for a time, it was the impresario.

I have spent my entire professional life in the arts. In fact, even much of my childhood was spent creating theatrical performances of different stripes. As a fourth-grade student, I wrote and directed a "Star Wars"-inspired play for my classmates. I created what we would now call "immersive" theater experiences for my youngest brother in our basement. When my grandparents would visit, my younger brother and I would mount puppet

shows behind a small stage my mother and father had built for us. As one might expect, Grandma Milligan was always our most reliable and enthusiastic audience member.

For the Independence Day neighborhood-gatherings my parents would host, I would coordinate patriotic entertainment—living tableaux in which we would recreate a famous painting, "Washington Crossing the Delaware" or Archibald Willard's "The Spirit of '76," depicting a fife-and-drum trio.

So, I suppose it's no wonder that I've spent my career in the performing arts, working alongside theatrical producers and impresarios. These days, as many of you know, I serve as managing director for Cincinnati Opera, one of the finest opera companies in North America and a treasured local institution

that will celebrate its centennial in 2020.

Tonight, I'd like to offer a perspective on the impresario through the lives of three American examples—one from the Era of Enlightenment when classical music was just beginning to intrigue American audiences; one from the early days of mass-marketed entertainment; and one who put art in the forefront of our nation's epic and continuing struggle for civil rights.

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**L**orenzo Da Ponte was the oldest of three boys, living in the Jewish ghetto of a small city in the Republic of Venice. His father was a leatherworker who made belts and bridles. When he was just five, Lorenzo's mother died. And when he was in his early teen years, his father decided the family would convert to Christianity—their prospects as Jews in the Venetian Republic were dismal. During his high school years, young Lorenzo received a proper education under the supervision of the local bishop. He studied Latin and the ancient classics along with works by the Italian poets Dante and Petrarch. Eventually, he could recite *Inferno* from memory, as well as most of Petrarch's sonnets.

He entered the priesthood and was ordained at the age of 24. But his role with the Church didn't last: he had fallen in love with a married woman in Venice and with the Venetian nightlife of gambling, opera, and theatre.

Eventually banished from the Republic for "mala vita" or "bad living," Lorenzo made his way to Vienna where he fell into the newly created position of librettist to the

Italian Theater. And it was in Vienna that he met Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart. Over the course of four years, he and Mozart created three operas that would solidify their legacy for the ages. The first of these efforts was an adaptation of a new play that had recently premiered in Paris. The play was titled *The Marriage of Figaro*. The partnership went on to produce *Don Giovanni*, surely inspired in part by Da Ponte's friendship with Casanova, and the battle-of-the-sexes comic opera, *Così fan Tutte*.

After the death of Emperor Joseph II, Da Ponte fell out of favor and was ordered to leave Vienna. His career as a famous artist was over. He moved to London where he opened and closed a few businesses and in time came into the employ of another theater. As ever, Da Ponte's finances were in abominable condition. And so, rather than facing debtors' prison, Da Ponte and his family set off for the New World.

Lorenzo Da Ponte loved his native Italy—its language, its literature, its music. And as soon as he arrived in New York City at the age of 56, he began the final act of his remarkable life—a quixotic journey to bring Italian culture to American audiences.

It was a chance meeting at a bookstore that determined Da Ponte's course. There at Riley's booksellers on Broadway, Mozart's librettist met Clement Moore—yes, that Clement Moore, who would later become famous for his 1823 Christmas poem "A Visit from St. Nicholas." The new friendship led Da Ponte to a professional engagement more suited to his education. In 1807 he became the first professor of Italian at Columbia College, where Moore's father, Bishop Benjamin Moore, served as president.

Opera did not figure prominently in New York's—or America's—cultural scene in the 1820s, though there was a thriving interest in French opera in New Orleans. But there were no opera companies or conservatories to train musicians. Among the first few music schools were Boston's New England Conservatory and Cincinnati's Conservatory of Music, both begun in 1867. Juilliard wasn't founded until 1905.

There were, however, occasional tours by troupes from Europe. Da Ponte had been involved with presenting and promoting these troupes, but none had lasting success.

He concluded that the reason Italian opera wasn't taking root in America was the lack of a proper theater. So, at the age of 84, he decided to do something about it. He began a fundraising campaign with the goal of building a suitable home for his beloved art form. And in less than a year, New York's Italian Opera House was built at the intersection of Leonard and Church streets in Lower Manhattan in an area known as the Triangle Below Canal Street or TriBeCa.

Da Ponte's theater opened on November 18, 1833, with Rossini's *La Gazza Ladra*. What a thrill it must have been to hear that opera's overture inaugurate the nation's first theater built for opera.

With the operas of Verdi and Puccini still years away, the repertoire of the Italian Opera House focused heavily on Rossini. At the beginning, the response was positive. The 1993 book *Opera in America*, describes the reaction, "New Yorkers had done what they wanted to do—emulate the glitter of European operatic audiences."

But in the weeks and months ahead as performances continued, the appeal faded. A review in the

*Morning Courier and New York Enquirer* suggested that the audience's engagement was superficial. It praised the "beautiful scenery, magnificent dresses, and interesting stage incidents," and then observed, "Our taste for music is comparatively in its infancy, and we all know that a little gold leaf on the surface of the gingerbread enhances its value."

After only two seasons, the company producing in the Italian Opera House folded. At 87 years old, Da Ponte was despondent—his dream of bringing Italian opera to America was lost. He wrote, "I do not know whether a good or evil genius inspired me to bring music here... I had hoped that in doing so my name might become immortal. It was just the opposite. My name was given instead to scorn, calumny, indigence, and oblivion! I sunk in this enterprise all I had saved for my decrepit days, and I was rewarded with ingratitude by everybody!"

His friends—particularly former students—stepped up to help, providing financial support and moral encouragement. In the summer of 1838, at the age of 89, Lorenzo da Ponte died, his quixotic adventure at its end.

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**D**espite the failure of the first Italian opera house, the American public seemed eager for hearing world-class operatic singing. One astute impresario saw this potential and leveraged it for all it was worth. He would give the audience what they wanted.

He was born in the summer of 1810 in Bethel, Connecticut, about

70 miles northeast of New York City. He was named Phineas after his grandfather. As a young man, he tried his hand at many different businesses. But by the time he was 25, he found his calling: to be a showman.

P.T. Barnum's first brush with notoriety was associated with a traveling attraction that he promoted as "The Greatest Natural and National Curiosity in the World." This "curiosity" was a person, namely Joice Heth, a nearly paralyzed, elderly African American woman that Barnum sold as "Nurse to General George Washington." Even more extraordinary, he claimed she was 161 years old.

Having had success in this morally questionable venture, Barnum formed a variety troupe and acquired a five-story building in Lower Manhattan that he turned into Barnum's American Museum. For the price of admission, you could see on display giraffes, elephants, tigers, and whales along with living-human attractions including a bearded lady, General Tom Thumb, and conjoined Siamese twins Chang and Eng. One could also inspect curious objects and watch Shakespearean dramas performed in a theatre.

In 1844 and 1845 Barnum mounted a European tour with a child performer—the boy was 6 or 7 at the time. He was named Charles Sherwood Stratton but was known popularly as General Tom Thumb. At the time, he was just over two feet tall. The tour enjoyed tremendous popular attention and won them private audiences with both Queen Victoria and the Czar of Russia.

P.T. Barnum was extraordinarily successful, but he was always in pursuit of the next one-of-a-kind curiosity. Something not just extraordinary, but exquisite.

It was during his Tom Thumb tour that he'd heard of a soprano from Sweden named Jenny Lind. Felix Mendelssohn called her "as great an artist as ever lived." Clara Schumann declared her, "a great, heaven-inspired being... a pure, true artist." Hans Christian Andersen, who fell desperately in love with her wrote, "No book or personality whatever has exerted a more ennobling influence on me, as a poet, than Jenny Lind. For me she opened the sanctuary of art."

Barnum engaged Lind for an American tour without ever having heard her. In fact, when the two finally met, she asked where he'd heard her sing. "I never had the pleasure of seeing you before in my life," he explained. "I risked it on your reputation, which in musical matters I would much rather trust than my own judgment."

Barnum guaranteed Lind a fee of \$1,000 per concert for up to 150 concerts. In today's dollars that per-concert fee would be about \$30,000. Motivated by the earnings potential, which she hoped to use to establish a musical academy for girls in Stockholm, Lind agreed to the terms of a contract in February of 1850.

Within days, Barnum placed this statement in the papers. "Perhaps I may not make any money by this enterprise; but I assure you that if I knew I should not make a farthing profit, I would ratify the engagement, so anxious am I that the United States should be visited by a lady whose vocal powers have never been approached by any other human being, and whose character is charity, simplicity, and goodness personified."

Jenny Lind departed Liverpool aboard the *Atlantic* and arrived in New York City on Sunday, September 1, 1850. An adoring and expectant throng had gathered to see her. Barnum had decorated the

wharf with flowers, flags, and signs reading "Welcome to America" and "Welcome, Jenny Lind." Her appearance on coming ashore was later described by an eyewitness: she was "as fresh and rosy as if Neptune had kindly spared her his usual discomforts."

Much was made of Lind's moral rectitude and her "uninterrupted habit of a daily observance of her religious duties." This appealed to America, whose people were skeptical of artists and performers, in a way that was foreign to the European public. One German poet dryly dubbed Lind "prima donna immaculata."

The Lind-Barnum tour began in New York City with the first performance on the evening of September 11 at Castle Garden, an enormous theater with a seating capacity of 6,000, on the southernmost tip of Manhattan.

After an overture then an aria by the Italian baritone traveling with the troupe, Jenny Lind arrived onstage. The ovation was immediate and ecstatic. "Never in this world" reported one audience member, "was a mortal greeted with such an outburst of applause." Some threw bouquets; others waved handkerchiefs. All were on their feet. And once the audience had settled, Jenny Lind sang. She offered "Casta Diva," from *Norma*. And then to appease the enthralled audience, she sang it again. The evening ended with "Welcome to America," a song commissioned for the occasion with lyrics by the winner of a competition.

Jenny Lind triumphed in New York, winning enormous public favor, which she compounded by donating her share of the net proceeds to twelve charities, including the Fire Department Fund.

And so, the nine-month tour had begun. After New York, it continued along the East Coast with performances in Boston, Providence, Philadelphia, Baltimore, Washington, Richmond, and Charleston. Then Havana. Then New Orleans—for 12 performances—and up the Mississippi River stopping at Natchez, Memphis, and then St Louis for five performances.

The traveling party included Lind, Barnum, his oldest daughter Caroline, then 18, two other singers—a baritone and a tenor, a conductor, and the fifteen men who made up the orchestra.

After St. Louis, the troupe traveled south again on the Mississippi to the Cumberland River for two performances in Nashville. En route to Louisville, Jenny Lind and several from the party visited Mammoth Caves. Once deep inside the caves, a violinist from the troupe performed Agathe's Prayer from the opera *Der Freischütz*.

At about 8 a.m. on the morning of Saturday, April 12, 1851, the Barnum-Lind company arrived in Cincinnati aboard the steamboat Ben Franklin. Two thousand people had gathered on the banks of the Ohio to catch a glimpse of the world-famous soprano.

The company stayed at the Burnet House, which Barnum's daughter declared "the finest hotel we have seen since we left New York." In fact, this first-class hotel had been open for only 11 months when Jenny Lind checked in. In subsequent years, this 340-room hotel hosted many famous persons, including Abraham Lincoln and Oscar Wilde. It was razed in 1926.

Barnum had booked the National Theatre on Sycamore Street for the concerts. It's where the Great American building now stands. Incredibly, the National was erected

over the course of only two months in 1837. It offered a seating capacity of about 2,500.

Jenny Lind's debut in Cincinnati was scheduled for Monday, April 14 at 8 p.m. Tickets were \$2, \$3 or \$5—the equivalent of about \$60, \$90, and \$150 today.

The *Cincinnati Enquirer*, which had begun publishing in 1841, reported on the crowd gathering outside the theater in the hours leading up to the concert. Without tickets to the performance, these onlookers were determined to at least see the international star arrive at the theater. "At length came a splendid vehicle out of which alighted a single lady and gentleman," reported the *Enquirer*. "Hurrah for Jenny Lind, was shouted again and again, the crowd forming around the pair so as almost to prevent their progress to the entrance of the house." But it was a false alarm—for Jenny had arrived two hours earlier. Frustrated, some in the crowd scaled fences or threw "brickbats." A few even climbed atop houses near the theater, attempting to peer inside the top windows. Police were called in to control the "blackguards."

The writer, credited as "the local editor," declared, "We lift of our voice against [such scenes] as strongly as anybody can, and we hope they will not be re-enacted."

The *Enquirer* also provided this account of the concert itself: "The first concert of Jenny Lind took place at the National on Monday evening, and was a most successful one. The house was densely crowded, and by the gayest audience we ever beheld in the Queen City. Beauty and fashion were there in their triumph."

The reviewer described appearances by Italian singers baritone Giovanni Belletti, with whom Lind had sung staged operas in Europe, and tenor Lorenzo Salvi, who had

just joined the tour. The two men opened the concert with a duet from the comic opera *The Elixir of Love*. It was well received but all attention was on the anticipated appearance of the Swedish Nightingale herself, Jenny Lind. The review continued:

"In each face the mind could be traced in its anxious waiting for the first glimpse of the star of the evening. [And then] ... Jenny appeared! ... Instead of the ungraceful figure which we have read of, she presents what we regard as a very fine and commanding one... Her face ... is the very impersonation of purity, modesty, and talent. ... no affectations, no airs, no coquetries; she appears and retires, walks and stands and looks the highly cultivated lady, conscious of her own high merits as an artist, and her sterling virtues as a woman."

Of her performance, the *Enquirer* largely avoided comment, saying "We shall not venture a criticism upon Jenny as an artist," merely declaring instead that the songs "Home, Sweet Home" with the lyrics, "Mid pleasures and palaces thou we may roam/Be it ever so humble, there's no place like home" and the high-flying "Bird Song," were "the charm and the favorites of the evening."

The second concert was held on Wednesday, April 16. The program's format was the same, but the musical selections, published in advance, were entirely different. Clearly, this was Barnum's strategy to entice a return visit by audiences and reporters.

Sure enough, the *Enquirer* reviewed "the second grand concert of the Swedish nightingale" in the Friday edition of the paper. It began by praising the audience, "It was indeed a beautiful sight to see so many well-dressed ladies and gentlemen drawn together to hear the warbling of that sweet bird of song,

Jenny Lind." The writer reported that "Men were there in white kid gloves who never went gloved before, and ladies with opera glasses who had not until then become convinced of their use."

As before, there was particular praise for Jenny's non-opera selections, in this case the "Echo Song." "She accompanied herself upon the piano," wrote the reviewer. "And when she finished there was but one voice in its praise, and that one combined the entire audience. To say that it was beautiful, wonderful, would be saying but little. It is unapproachable and none but Jenny Lind could accomplish it."

During the nine-day stay in Cincinnati, Lind and her troupe gave four concerts. Three had been scheduled: Monday, Wednesday, and Thursday. One might have presumed a Monday-Wednesday-Friday run of appearances, but as this was Holy Week, a Friday appearance would have fallen on Good Friday.

As he had several times on this great journey, Barnum, a resolute teetotaler himself and Universalist for most of his adult life, gave a temperance lecture on that Good Friday to a full house, most likely at First Universalist Church on Walnut Street.

In his autobiography, Barnum recounts one of these lectures in front of a large crowd in New Orleans.

"I was in capital humor," wrote Barnum. "And had warmed myself into a pleasant state of excitement, feeling that the audience was with me. While in the midst of an argument illustrating the poisonous and destructive nature of alcohol to the [body's] economy, some opponent called out, 'how does it affect us, externally or internally?' 'E-ternally,' I replied. Scarcely ever have I heard such tremendous and simultaneous

merriment as followed this reply. I was not allowed to proceed for several minutes, on account of the repetition of applause."

Jenny Lind gave her fourth and final concert in Cincinnati on Tuesday, April 22. She and the troupe departed that evening, heading upstream with appearances planned for Wheeling, Pittsburgh, and then a series of farewell concerts back at New York's Castle Garden.

Under Barnum's management Jenny Lind gave 95 concerts. Total gross revenue was \$712,000—equivalent to \$22 million today. Lind's portion amounted to \$5.5 million, twice what she had expected.

After the tour, Jenny Lind went on to marry her music director Otto Goldschmidt. The couple moved back to Europe. They had three children. Jenny continued to give concerts and began teaching. She retired from singing in her early 60s and died in England at age 67.

After the Lind tour, Barnum went on to even greater success with the founding of what began as "P.T. Barnum's Grand Traveling Museum, Menagerie, Caravan & Hippodrome," eventually becoming The Barnum and Bailey Circus, promoted and known as "The Greatest Show on Earth." But it was Barnum's American tour with Jenny Lind that has been heralded as the music event of the 19<sup>th</sup> century.

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If the Barnum-Lind tour was the musical event of the Victorian century, the musical event of the next century carried with it a powerful message about social justice.

When Constitution Hall was built in 1929 it was the largest concert hall in Washington, DC. It re-

mains so today with a seating capacity of 3,700. The building is owned by the Daughters of the American Revolution, a lineage-based society. It was purpose-built by the DAR to host its annual convention, but was routinely rented out to other groups. In fact, the Hall was home to the National Symphony Orchestra from its founding in 1931 until the Kennedy Center opened in 1971.

In the months leading up to April 1939, a phone call had been placed to the management of Constitution Hall to inquire about availability of Easter Sunday, April 9 for a concert by the renowned African American contralto Marian Anderson. The response was immediate: not available. Other dates were suggested by Anderson's management. And each time, the response from the Hall's manager was the same — not available. This was odd. Anderson's manager asked a rival manager to inquire about the same dates for white artists, and the dates were now suddenly available.

Marian Anderson's manager Sol Hurok then called Constitution Hall himself, confronting the Hall's manager. The manager was unapologetically defiant: "No date will ever be available for Marian Anderson in Constitution Hall!"

Sol Hurok was born Solomon Gurkov into a Jewish family in 1888 in what was then a remote part of the Russian Empire, about 300 miles southwest of Moscow. Hurok wrote of his childhood home in a 1953 biography, portraying it as an idyll of folk music. "To be born in Russia is to be born singing," he once said. He spoke little of the increasing persecution of Jews in Russia, although that must have factored into Hurok's decision to leave for America at the age of 17.

Like Da Ponte a century earlier, he found America lacking in culture. "I pity Americans because they

have no light, no song in their lives. They are but children in everything pertaining to art."

After a series of odd jobs, Hurok established himself as an impresario by presenting the Russian violinist Efrem Zimbalist. He went on to present leading artists at the Hippodrome under the banner "S. Hurok presents." He became known as "The King of Ballet," and the long-time manager for violinist Isaac Stern, pianist Arthur Rubinstein, classical guitarist Andrés Segovia, and Marian Anderson, among many others.

Marian Anderson was ten years younger than Hurok. She'd grown up in Philadelphia singing in her family's church. Her extraordinary voice—she was a contralto—won her acclaim, but she struggled to make a career. With the hope of following in the path of Paul Robeson or Josephine Baker, she made her way to Europe.

In the spring of 1935, Anderson gave a series of concerts at the Salle Gaveau in Paris. So extraordinary were these concerts that Anderson immediately received offers from managers. Sol Hurok, already well established at this point, was the one she chose.

Her reintroduction to America was quickly orchestrated by Hurok. He planned a 15-city tour that would begin in New York before the year was out. And so, on December 30, at Town Hall in the heart of Broadway's Theater District, Marian Anderson gave her homecoming concert. She offered selections by Handel, Schubert, and Verdi, along with several spirituals. The New York Times critic wrote, "Let it be said at the outset: Marian Anderson has returned to her native land one of the great singers of our time."

In the weeks that followed, Anderson toured throughout the US. She regularly faced segregation and

discrimination. Some hotels refused to rent her rooms. Some venues required that she use the servant's entrance or freight elevator. Some restaurants denied her a table. Train stations required her to sit in the "colored" waiting room.

A few years later, in 1939, Anderson had been invited to appear in the nation's capital by Howard University, a historically black university. Anticipating high demand for tickets, it was decided that the most favorable venue for the concert would be Constitution Hall.

Throughout the turmoil that followed Constitution Hall's refusal to allow the esteemed contralto to sing there and the challenge of finding an alternate venue in Washington, Anderson remained dignified. Sol Hurok, however, was a bulldog. "She's going to sing there if I have to put up a tent. When we plan a thing, we go through with it."

Hurok's crusade on Anderson's behalf was bolstered when First Lady Eleanor Roosevelt announced she was resigning her honorary membership in the DAR. Immediately, Hurok encouraged leading cultural figures to follow the First Lady's example by sending a telegram to his network. The text called the DAR's behavior "un-American" and "a violation of the spirit of the Constitution."

On March 31, an announcement was made to the public. Marian Anderson would indeed sing in the nation's capital on Easter Sunday. She would sing outside in front of the Lincoln Memorial.

Nine days later, an enormous crowd was gathered on the National Mall. The Secretary of the Interior stepped up to the microphones and spoke, "In this great auditorium under the sky, all of us are free." The crowd applauds. "When God gave us this wonderful outdoors, and the sun, the moon and the stars, he

made no distinction of race, or creed or color." Again, the crowd cheers.

He continued, "Today we stand reverently and humbly at the base of this memorial to the Great Emancipator while a glorious tribute is rendered to his memory by a daughter of the race from which he struck the chains of slavery." The audience erupted.

And then she began, "My country, 'tis of thee / Sweet land of liberty / Of thee, we sing."

The concert was only 25 minutes long and at the end, Anderson spoke. "I am overwhelmed. I just can't talk. I can't tell you what you have done for me today. I thank you from the bottom of my heart again and again."

The concert was transmitted nationally by radio and film. It made Anderson an international celebrity and an icon of the Civil Rights movement. Sixteen years later, in 1955, Marian Anderson appeared on the Metropolitan Opera stage as the company's first African-American soloist. She sang for Eisenhower's second inauguration in 1957 and Kennedy's in 1961. The tide was turning.

The following statement appears even today on the DAR's website on a page devoted to the Marian Anderson concert, "Our organization truly wishes that history could be re-written, but knowing that it cannot, we are proud to note that DAR has learned from the past."

Hurok died in 1974. His funeral was at Carnegie Hall where he had presented so many concerts. The greats were in attendance: Leonard Bernstein, Agnes de Mille, Van Cliburn, Roberta Peters, Rudolf Bing, and Renata Tebaldi.

Marian Anderson delivered the eulogy. Her words can also be heard as the definition an impresario: "He launched hundreds of careers—he magnified thousands of others, and

in the process he brought joy and a larger life to millions. ... He made not ripples, but waves, even beyond his own shores, and what is one to say of the man who guided one's life for nigh on to forty years? He was more than the supreme impresario. He was a teacher, counsel, friend, and even more than that, he was the 'we' in all of us."

On paper, an outdoor vocal recital with piano, amplified by a 1930s-era sound system leaves a lot to be desired. But in this case, it wasn't about the what, it was about the why. Marian Anderson and Sol Hurok decided she would perform in front of the Lincoln Memorial to make a statement the world would hear: freedom will prevail and art can lead the way.

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In the end what do we make of the impresario? Is he just another entertainment entrepreneur?

The successful impresario is an explorer, always on a quest for the outcasts or outliers with a unique ability to surprise and thrill. Alden Whitman, in writing of Hurok's passing for the *New York Times* called this ability "that indefinable something that comes over the footlights and strikes an audience in its solar plexus."

The successful impresario is also an evangelist, an eternal optimist conveying his faith in an artist or an art form. He sells his passion, demonstrating the words of the great English poet and artist William Blake, "Mere enthusiasm is the all in all."

So, should we believe the man behind the curtain? His promise to amaze, astonish, entertain, and inspire? Of course, the only way to

know is to see for ourselves — to buy a ticket and turn our attention to the stage as the lights go down. That's when the magic begins — show time.

*This paper was read by Christopher Milligan on March 12, 2018 at 8:00 p.m. at the Literary Club, 500 E. 4<sup>th</sup> Street in downtown Cincinnati.*

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The author wishes to acknowledge the following publications as references and resources for his paper.

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