

CARMEN VIGLUCCI

## The Slot Man



The way I see opera is that if it were football the tenor would be the quarterback. All kinds of people from stage technicians, set decorators, the orchestra, even the conductor and the other singers all break their collective backs for dear old Verdi U. but at curtain call guess who is the super star. The guy with the high voice.

And you can bet that he gets the lion's share of the gate receipts, too.

Such has always been the case. Ask any dilettante opera follower who was the greatest singer of all time and invariably you'll hear Enrico Caruso or Jussi Bjorling or John McCormack. Now all of these guys were tenors.

There might be somebody who will venture Ezio Pinza, a basso. But he's the exception, akin to Sam Huff or Big Daddy Lipscomb.

This all became clear when a group of people from the Courier Journal and some camp-followers attended La Boheme recently.

Most people know that Boheme is about a bunch of 1830 hippies scrounging around in Paris. Four of these long-hairs share a garret apartment and while three of them are out hustling, the fourth is surprised by a lovely little doll who stops by looking for a light for her candle. Honest. Now this guy just happens to be the tenor (see what I mean).

Right off the bat, he gets to sing one of the top 20 on the all-time opera charts — Che Gelida Manina.

Mimi, that's his girl-friend's name, is really strung out. Consumption they call it but it never stops her from singing. I mean loud. But, like the Buffalo Bills, she doesn't have a chance. Now don't get it wrong. Puccini, the guy that wrote Boheme, knew enough about women's lib to throw the soprano a few good notes (a lot of opera persons did this). But even that can't compare with how they cater to the tenor.

There was another wrinkle

to the production here. Kerry McDevitt, an Eastman School grad, sang one of the leading roles and he caught lots of ovation because he is the hometown boy making good. Again, it's not like football where a guy like O. J. Simpson walks out of school and begins dragging it down immediately in the professional ranks. Music is not that easy; you get out of college with the Heisman Singing Trophy and you're still on your own and by no means have a ticket to stardom.

For one reason more people sing than play football. Two, singing takes a lot more training and a lot more talent.

Anyway, this guy McDevitt has a lot of good moves and seems to sing fine which gives the hometown crowd reason to cheer but even all this is no match for the tenor, an Italian named Veriano Luchetti who doesn't even kick field goals.

He just stands there and bellows, gets the girl (even though she is a loser), accepts the hurrahs, gets the rave reviews, picks up his dough and goes off to conquer Cincinnati or someplace like that.

But it was a good show; better than the TV football game that night which featured Bears losing to Dolphins.

## Jane Fonda to Star In Film on Melvilles

New York (RNS) — The story of two former Maryknoll missionaries who later took part in the draft board raid of the "Catonsville Nine" will be filmed by Warner Brothers, with Jane Fonda and Donald Sutherland portraying Marjorie and Thomas Melville.

The movie will be based on the experience of the couple when both were missionaries in Guatemala — Melville as a priest and his wife a nun.

Based on their book, Whose Heaven, Whose Earth? (Alfred A. Knopf), the film is slated to begin production next Spring in Latin America.

## Conference on Aging

### Exploitation of Elderly Condemned

Washington, D.C. — (RNS) — Exploitation of the elderly for profit "is running into the hundreds of thousands of dollars" each year with the taxpayers picking up the tab, a priest involved in social services charged at the White House Conference on Aging here.

He then called on the conference to examine this activity as it relates to the provision of human services and the care of the elderly, especially poverty-stricken old people.

Msgr. Lawrence J. Corcoran, national secretary of the National Conference of Catholic Charities and spokesman for Catholic interests at the conference, raised the question at an "open forum" in which spokesmen for constituent groups were given time to raise questions on pertinent issues.

Concerning the cost of delivery of "human services," including services to the elderly, he said that "the cost of services is constantly increasing, and there is great difficulty in finding funds to finance them."

At the same time, he continued, "we note the increasing amount of profit being made on these services," and "we question whether the elderly, and others in need of human services, should be burdened with this added cost, the cost of profit for the entrepreneur."

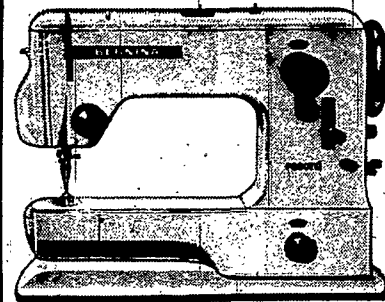
Without directing his remarks to any group or profes-

sion, Msgr. Corcoran went on to question "whether the hard-to-get tax funds should be spent for the profit, or excessively high salaries, of those providing human services."

He urged the White House Conference to examine the question which, he said, might focus on the high cost of taking care of the elderly in nursing

and rest homes and other such institutions.

Msgr. Corcoran was even more critical of those "persons becoming rich on the delivery of services to the elderly who are also poor," noting that the profits are running into the hundreds of thousands a year and that the taxpayers are the ones exploited.



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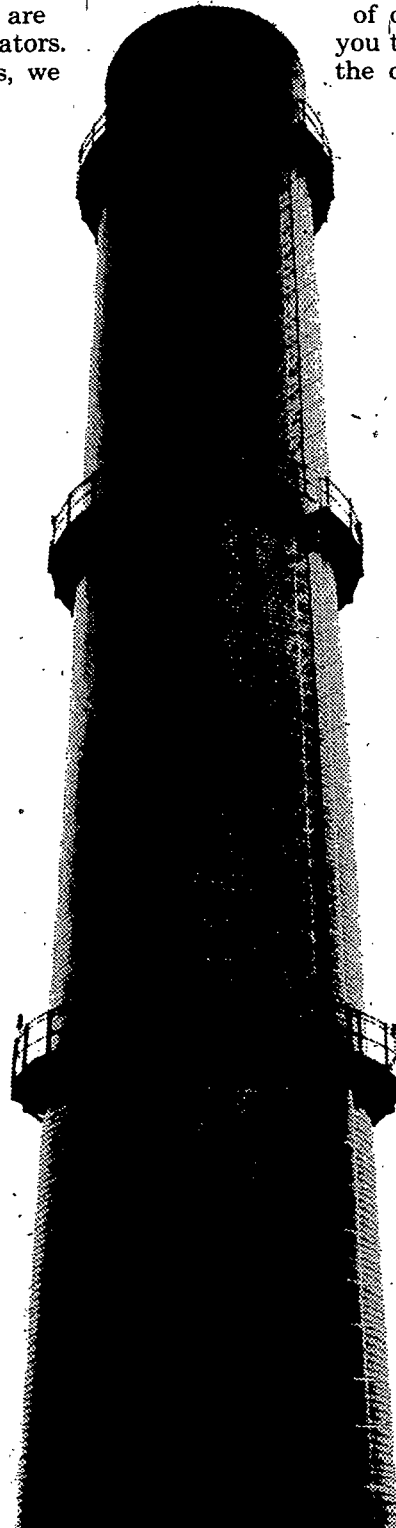
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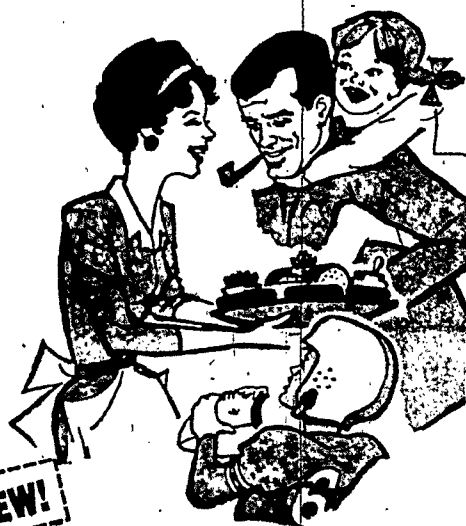
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