

SPRING SEMESTER, 1979

Sabbatical Leave Report

submitted by

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October 18, 1979

Mr. Hayden Blanchard, Instructor
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Dear Hayden:

Your recital last week was a delight from beginning to end. I thoroughly enjoyed it all.

Your sabbatical was wonderful, and I can see that it rejuvenated you. I loved your enthusiasm, your fascinating stories, and your marvelous songs.

Thanks for sharing yourself with the students and with the rest of us too.

I'm glad the sabbatical was such a terrific experience for you. Hope this year is more of the same.

Sincerely,

Carter Doran
Dean, Humanities Division

CD/kvd

cc: Gary Toops

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Introduction and Acknowledgement

Through this report, I hope to share with the Board of Trustees and the Administration the marvelous experience that was afforded me during the spring semester of 1979.

Never have I had the opportunity to investigate and witness so many musical experiences in such a period of time.

Let me take this time to thank the Board of Trustees and administrators for granting me this sabbatical leave. I hope that from this experience I can enthusiastically impart some of this aesthetic growth to my students and colleagues.

In this report, I will highlight some of the glorious experiences that benefitted me on this leave. There were many moments so that this paper can only report a few of them. Included will be an itinerary of my trip.

I. Purpose of Leave

I have been a teacher at Mt. San Antonio College for eleven years and I began to feel that I needed to observe musical happenings in other parts of the country and Europe. My own growth seemed at a standstill. Being away from my usual surroundings would allow me to evaluate myself as a person and teacher and to see in what ways I might improve.

I found it important to visit rehearsals and performances of choirs in New York City and Europe. In doing this I would obtain new ideas on conducting techniques and performance practices that could be applied to my choir directing.

As a voice teacher, the opportunity of attending a debut performance at the Metropolitan Opera in New York City would show me what a singer hopes to attain as an ultimate artistic goal. Attending the first performance of a Cavalli opera in Lyon, France since its premiere in the 17th century and observing a week of rehearsals and the performance in Paris of an opera from the Roman school of the 17th century, afforded me the chance of hearing the bel canto style of singing at its best. Monody from the 17th century would be invaluable in learning the style while listening to singers from all parts of the world.

The teaching of music history has made me desire the opportunity

to visit such places as Avignon, Solemnes, Florence, and Vienna where so many important historical musical events have taken place. This would be profitable in imparting this knowledge to my students here at Mt. San Antonio College.

The Biblioteque National in Paris, the Biblioteca Medicea Laurenziana in Florence and the British Museum in London, would afford me the opportunity of viewing the original manuscripts of Handel's "Messiah"; I would be able to see and study important original musical compositions.

II. Preparation for Leave

The preparation for this leave started years ago as I accumulated data that I hoped one day to see and investigate.

Through interviews with Dr. Robert Fowells, professor of Music, and Esther Andreas, professor emeritus of Music at California State University at Los Angeles I learned what approach one should have toward a sabbatical in Europe.

The books "Musical Europe" by Marianne Adelman and "Musical Italy Revisited" by Signor Levari were invaluable in helping to prepare the exact itinerary desired for my leave.

In discussing the sabbatical with my colleagues, Lewis Forney and Clayton Cowan I learned many things about traveling alone in Europe. They were very helpful in suggesting important musical events that were being held in Europe at this time of the year.

I requested interviews with Maestro Newell Jenkins, renowned musicologist and conductor of the Clarion Opera and Orchestra of New York City. He very graciously accepted the invitation to be interviewed.

Miss Carol Neblett invited me to attend her debut performance at the Metropolitan Opera in New York City. She assured me that I would meet the conductor of the Metropolitan Opera, Mr. James Levine and the stage director of the opera, Mr. Jean Pierre Ponnelle, world famous French director.

III. Itinerary of Leave

February and March

Performance of "Mrs. Havershim's Fire" by Dominic Argento
at the New York City Center Opera Company.

Performance of the Yale University Orchestra featuring
Phyllis Curtin at Carnegie Hall.

Performance of Amor Artis Chorale at the Cloisters in New
York City.

Performance of "Die Fliegende Hollander" by Richard Wagner
at the Metropolitan Opera.

Interviews with Newell Jenkins, Director of the Clarion
Opera of New York City.

Research in the New York Public Library.

April

2-5	London, England
5-7	Paris, France
7-10	Madrid, Spain - side trip to El Escorial Valle de los Caidos Toledo
10-11	Sevilla, Spain
11-15	Barcelona, Spain - side trip to Montserrat
15-17	Avignon, France
17-18	Rheims, France
19-27	Paris, France - side trip to Versailles Chartres Vallenciennes

28-May 1 Solemnes, France

May

1-2 Rouen, France
3-5 Lyon, France
5-6 Vicenza and Castelfranco, Italy
7-8 Venezia, Italy
9-11 Florence, Italy
12-18 Vacation on Isola di Giglio, Italy
19-21 Rome, Italy
22-24 Vienna, Austria side trip to
Eisenstadt, Austria
24-26 Salzburg, Austria
26-27 Innsbruck, Austria
28-29 Zurich, Switzerland
30 Paris, France

June

1 London, England
2-10 New York City, New York
10-17 Baton Rouge, Louisiana
17-24 Mexico City, Mexico

IV. Report of Highlights

1. On March 23, 1979, after taking a train to upstate New York, I arrived at the home of Maestro Newell Jenkins, musicologist and conductor of the Clarion Opera and Orchestra of New York City.

Here I was able to interview Maestro Jenkins concerning opera in the Baroque style who is an authority on the subject. By listening to recordings of some of the operas he has done in his career we were able to discuss the art of embellishments in the Baroque style. The Da Capo aria and all it entails was discussed at length during this visit.

It was here that Maestro Jenkins invited me to preview a Baroque opera that was being performed in Lyon, France on May 4th. I was asked not only to review it for Opera News Magazine but to let him know of the value of the opera with the possibility of bringing the production to the United States.

On May 2nd in Lyon, France, after meeting the business manager of the Clarion Opera Company we were introduced to the public relations director of the Lyon Opera. It was through her that we were introduced to Luciano Sgrizzi, the orchestrator and transcriber of "Ercole Amante" by Cavalli. Through discussions with Signor Sgrizzi, I learned the technique of transcribing to modern notation a 17th century opera score. He also showed me how an editor has to supply his own melodic writing whenever the original manuscript was not

clear or missing from the score. This discussion on what modern instruments to use in place of the baroque ones that are no longer accessible was of great value to me.

At the dress rehearsal, we observed the staging which incorporated some of the 17th century stage machinery techniques such as ascending and descending clouds. These clouds of course were ridden by gods and goddesses. There were scenes that incorporated a boat sinking in a sea (which of course was material being moved back and forth by stage hands).

I had done much research on the origins of the Cavalli opera which was written for the wedding of Louis XIV and Marie Thérèse. This research included learning of the preparation for the building of the theater and the machinery for the first production.

The performance was very exciting and the singers were very well trained by Signor Sgrizzi and the conductor Signor Corboz in the style of monody in the 17th century.

2. On March 8, 1979, the Metropolitan Opera produced "Die Fliegende Hollander" by Richard Wagner. This was the debut of Carol Neblett at the Met as well as a very controversial production staged by the famous French director, Jean Pierre Ponnelle. Backstage before the performance, it was my privilege to meet James Levine in Miss Neblett's dressing room. There I was able to observe the last minute instructions and encouragement given by the conductor to a young soprano making such an important debut in her career. Of course the production received raves and boos from a divided audience.

After the performance, Anthony Bliss, general manager gave a sumptuous supper on the Met stage. It was my pleasure to sit at the table with Miss Neblett who introduced me to many well known people in the world of opera including Mr. Bliss.

Later in the evening, at a private party for Miss Neblett, Mr. Levine and Mr. Ponnelle, I had the privilege of conversing at great length with Mr. Ponnelle. It was here that I learned so much about his reasons for staging opera the way he does today. He wants to make it vital in today's society rather than traditional to the point of boredom. The fact of such a mixed reaction by the audience proved his point as to how the public of today can become actively involved in a 19th century music drama such as the Flying Dutchman.

Also at a later date, I participated in a discussion with Miss Neblett and her voice teacher about her performance. The discussion

enabled me to hear what a professional singer feels about such a debut and how the voice teacher can constructively criticize and encourage such an artist to gain better perfection as the career progresses.

3. The Abbey of St. Pierre near Sablé, France, is located atop a hill overlooking the river Sarthe. This is where the Benedictine monks have lived since the 11th century. It is also here that several priests devote their time and gifts, by means of painstaking research, to restoring the ancient Gregorian Chant, the official music of the Roman Catholic Church, to its original purity.

On April 30 I left Paris at 5:00 one afternoon and arrived in Sablé at 10:00 p.m. There was a charming hotel across the street named Hotel des Voyageurs. The hotel owner informed me that Solemnes where the Abbey is located was only 4 miles from Sablé and that he would have a taxi waiting for me the next morning to take me to the monastery for mass.

When I arrived the next morning, I sent my Mt. San Antonio business card to Dom Jean Claire who is the director of the choir at Solemnes. He sent word for me to meet him after the mass. The mass was everything I had expected and more. It was absolutely beautiful. The entire mass was sung in Latin and Gregorian chant, except the lessons which were read in the vernacular. The organ played a processional and recessional, but everything else was sung unaccompanied. There were about 150 monks singing this magnificent service. This was a beauty that I shall never forget.

Dom Jean Claire directed the service by simply lifting his liber (the book of chants) in the air. One would never know who the director was unless they had been fortunate enough to be sitting in the very first pew as I was.

After mass, Dom Jean Claire met me and took me into the cloistered area. It was here that he showed me his workroom and the numerous chants from centuries ago. He has been charged by the Vatican to preserve these chants and to change the words if they do not fit the neumes (notes) to perfection. I stood in awe as I viewed manuscripts that had been written by monks from the 12th and 13th centuries.

After leaving the monastery, I walked back to my hotel in Sablé. It was springtime in the country. The flowers were blooming, the river was flowing, the cows were mooing. The only activity that was offensive were the cars on the road disturbing the tranquillity of the country side.

In the evening I returned to the Abbey for Vespers. This service was so filled with incense that one could hardly see the monks on the altar. I wondered how they were able to sing so beautifully as their lungs were filled with smoke.

There was an old monk waiting for me after Vespers. He spoke only French, and I was afraid that I had misunderstood what he had said, but he invited me to have lunch the next day with the entire congregation. I hoped that I had understood him correctly!

In the gift shop, I purchased a GRADUALE ROMANUM. This is the book containing all the chants for the entire church year. So the next morning I was able to follow the entire service as the monks chanted. I noticed that during the singing, every once in a while

a monk would genuflect, bow his head, rise up and resume singing. It was not until I was bidding Dom Jean Claire au revoir that he told me this was the way each one that made a mistake in singing would ask pardon.

After attending the chanting of Sext, a priest escorted me to the refectory. Here I was met by the Abbot who spoke beautiful English. He ushered me to an alcove where a young monk was waiting with a silver pitcher and basin. The abbot washed my hands, which symbolized my being welcomed into his house. I was so nervous I shook the water off my hands all over the young monk, just as the abbot was handing me a towel to dry my hands.

During the meal, one monk chanted prayers while the others ate. The solemnity was broken for me as I watched an old monk fall asleep. The devotion that these men show is so very overwhelming. I could hardly eat thinking about their life. They work all day and come into the church for all the different parts of the day in which they sing, namely at matins, lauds, mass, prime, terce, sext, nones, vespers, and compline. No wonder they sing so beautifully. They do it all day long, 7 days a week, all year long.

It was after lunch that Dom Jean Claire autographed my book and invited me to return to Solemnes with the understanding that I would stay at the monastery.

He bid me adieu as he went to practice with the Benedictine nuns who lived in a convent 2 miles up the winding road.

4. It has been my desire since I started teaching music history to see a certain manuscript from the 15th century. In the Biblioteca Medicea Laurenziana, there is housed, among thousands of other important documents, the Squarcialupi Codex. This is a manuscript of all the representative musical compositions such as caccia, madrigals, and baletti by composers of the 14th century. The name is derived from its former owner, Antonio Squarcialupi, a Florentine organist who lived in the 15th century.

After leaving Venezia on May 8th, I motored to Firenze where I was to be the guest of the former consul-general Merritt Cootes and his wife Jean. They have retired in Italy and live in a superb casa colonica on the outskirts of Florence. The Tuscan hillside was filled with the famous Chianti grapes. I had the pleasure of presenting a voice recital in their home one evening and was greatly rewarded by a tour of Florence and the surrounding countryside the next day.

The tour consisted of viewing the Baptistry of the Duomo as well as the Church of San Lorenzo which possesses the famous tower designed by the Italian artist, Giotto.

One of the most exciting parts of the tour was visiting the Palazzo di Bardi, the birthplace of 17th century opera. It was here that the Florentine Camerata met to dissolve the constant use of polyphony.

After asking to view the Squarcialupi Codex at the Medicean

Library, I was told that no one could see it. The gentleman who was with me spoke fluent Italian. Without my knowing it he said that I had come all the way from the United States and had hoped to view this book. They had me fill out several papers as well as presenting them with my business card from Mt. San Antonio College. On receiving this, they allowed me to view slides of the Codex, which were very beautiful.

My friend, who is very close to the former counsel-general decided that this was not enough.

While I was viewing the slides, he was conversing with the assistant librarian who said that if I could come back on a Tuesday or Friday the head librarian would be there and perhaps something could be worked out.

We were there on a Wednesday and were leaving the next day, so this was impossible. His last resort was to tell the assistant that we were guests of the counsel-general and if he, the counsel-general, had known what problems we were having surely he would do something about it.

All I know is at the next moment, I was being ushered into the office of the assistant librarian and soon two aides were carrying this overwhelmingly beautiful book covered in green velvet. The two presented me with the book and I humbly sat down and began to view it page by page.

The book contains 352 examples of music with beautiful illumina-

tions on each page. Some contain drawings of the composers and are so exquisite that it would take a lifetime to study the entire book.

I was told that not even the leading musicologists of the world are allowed to touch this manuscript, so I felt extremely fortunate to know the right people in Firenze.

5. On May 21, I arrived in Vienna and immediately took a walking tour of Old Wien. One of the most imposing sites is the State Opera House. This building has been the sight for many historical opera productions as well as the scene of many famous opera conductor's performances.

One of the most impressive churches in Vienna is St. Michael's. It was here that Franz Joseph Haydn was a choirboy. While walking through this area, I saw plaques on houses that had been inhabited by Frederic Chopin and Ludwig van Beethoven.

Perhaps the most imposing structure is the Schönbrunn Palace, the summer residence of Maria Theresa. It was here that Mozart performed as a child prodigy. The room is certainly spectacular and I must say a very warm feeling came over me as I realized that in this very room had been this young genius.

Mozart's house in Vienna is a very unimposing apartment. He lived here from 1784-1787. While he was in this home, he wrote "The Marriage of Figaro". There were many manuscripts of his in the home including some of his piano music.

On May 23, I visited the town of Eisenstadt, a very beautiful area near the Hungarian border. It was here that Franz Joseph Haydn was in the employ of the Esterhazy family for 29 years.

His own home was only 3 blocks from Shloss Esterhazy. In the palace is the famous "Haydnsaal" where he performed many of his 104 symphonies. The room next to the hall is the place in which he wrote

most of his quartets and symphonies. The information I received was that his wife nagged him so that he stayed at the palace and wrote rather than go home. His body was moved from Vienna and laid to rest in Eisenstadt. Much of his music is exhibited in his home and it can be viewed at one's leisure.

Probably the most beautiful setting for a city is Salzburg, Austria. The entire country is one of spectacular beauty and this town is nestled in these Austrian mountains. It was my pleasure to attend high mass on Ascension Thursday. It was held in the Dom Kirche where Mozart had been organist. This particular day the choir and orchestra were performing Anton Bruckner's "Mass in e minor". The altar was filled with the Cardinal and bishops of the area and the setting was quite impressive.

It is in this town that Mozart was born. His home is now a museum containing the small violin on which he studied as a little boy, as well as the piano on which he performed and wrote much of his music. There is so much memorabilia in this home including locks of his hair and buttons from his clothes.

Near his birthplace is the famous "Mozarteum" which contains the "Zauberflöte" house. This is a one-room structure, moved from Vienna to Salzburg, where he wrote "The Magic Flute". The entire city is filled with a feeling for classical music. There is a heritage of which to be very proud.

V. Value of the Sabbatical Leave

Before I began to write my sabbatical report, I had already seen how important this leave has been for me since this semester began.

First, in my music history class, I have already been able to discuss Gregorian Chant as I have never before. My visit to Solemnes and hearing the monks sing all the Offices of the Day have made my explanation of this musical event much more vivid and alive. My students here at Mt. San Antonio College certainly have been curious to know just what I did see and learn while I was away.

My experience with the opera has broadened my knowledge of embellishments in the Baroque style and as I conduct my choir in Handel's music I can see a freshness of approach which certainly was not there before I left Mt. Sac.

The techniques that I observed from St. Paul's Cathedral Choir in London and the El Escolania in Montserrat, Spain, has improved my own conducting abilities.

Each day I am refreshed by this experience of last spring. I feel that I can relate to my students better and certainly can practice much more patience since I have seen how other teachers and professionals must work so very hard to attain the results that they desire from their students and singers.

I trust that my colleagues and my students here at Mt. San Antonio College will see a growth in me that is due to the invaluable experience

that this school has afforded me.

It would be my pleasure to show the Board of Trustees and administrators my photo album and to discuss my sabbatical in part or in detail with them.