



A MOMENT IN TIME or SPONTANEITY

By John Brogan

I happened across Ruth in the art class this morning and in passing she suggested I contribute a page for Candela.

The art class had not started, not because we were early, but some of us had been to the opera last evening and needed to explore our experiences of *The Marriage of Figaro*.

There are times when one is aware that something special has transpired, a moment in time. Last night's performance was one of those inspirational events, the memory of which will remain, I know, for the rest of my days.



The amazing thing is that Mozart wrote the opera in a month on command of Emperor Joseph II of Austria. Mozart conducted the first two performances and at the end of the first performance the Emperor said to him:

"You must admit, however, my dear Mozart, that there are a great many notes in your score,"

"Not one too many, Sire," was Mozart's reply. (The anecdote, it should be noted is told of the first performance of Mozart's "*Così fan Tutti*" as well and also included in the film *Amadeus* in another context.)

No opera composed before *The Marriage of Figaro* can be compared with it for

development of ensemble, charm, and novelty of melody, richness and variety of orchestration. The finale to the second act occupied him but two days.

At the time of the first performance almost everything was being encored, so that the time required for its performance was nearly doubled. Notwithstanding this success, it was withdrawn after comparatively few representations, owing to Italian intrigue at the court and opera, led by Mozart's rival, the composer Salieri. (The name of Salieri is remembered today because of that rivalry.)

To place the event in history, it was in 1786, 14 years after Swedenborg's passing and 2 years before Arthur Phillip arrived in Sydney Cove.

I mention the anecdote of the "number of notes" in Mozart's work, (but not too many), because Swedenborg strove above all for clarity and directness. He wrote in Latin and uses a relatively limited vocabulary and very straightforward syntax. He coped with complex ideas by writing extensively (read; too many words) rather than intricately. I profess and admit that I read Swedenborg's Writings in as close to the original translation as possible (though not in Latin). When I read a synopsis of the *Arcana* say, I feel robbed. I feel someone has come between Swedenborg and me - it is an intrusion.

Likewise I read the King James Bible version or earlier translations in preference to modern versions. The beauty of the language is still felt and the poetry of expression is not lost to the same extent as a modern translation.

Mozart wrote the score of this three-hour play in four weeks. It is a play of humour, intrigue, contretemps galore and social comment. The last is not the least of