

KOZMA LAJOS, operacénekes

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## Fanfare for A Venice Festival

By Paul Hume

Late yesterday afternoon, just before the organ and brass instruments in the foyer opened the Kennedy Center's two-week Venetian Festival, the sky, seen through the west windows, was pure Canaletto. As the soft pink and gold faded gently, the sounds of Venice, centuries old, in the voices of Gabrieli and Marcello, Albinoni and Vivaldi echoed through the length and breadth of the great hall.

With the trumpet of Martin Berinbaum brilliantly leading the way, a fanfare heralded the opening of a new season in the Center. Joining trombones and a second trumpet, organist Richard Morris, playing a large, electronic organ brought in for the occasion, added festive sounds reminiscent of the pageantry that was seen and heard regular-

ly in the piazza of Saint Mark's.

Perhaps as many as 800 to 1,000 people lined the foyer and Hall of Nations facing the instrumentalists, many of them anticipating the two one-act operas that followed soon thereafter in the Opera House.

There, the Virtuosi di Roma under Renato Fasano played for Cimarosa's curtain-raiser, "The Music Master," and Rossini's early romp, "The Marriage Contract." What an orchestra to have in an opera pit! Nothing could more thoroughly have emphasized the virtuosity of the players than the Cimarosa comedy, which is all about an opera singer who knows far better than the conductor just

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how a score should be played.

As Paolo Montarsolo demonstrated to each of the instruments just how they should handle their assignments, the Virtuosi demonstrated right back that anything he could suggest, they could improve on.

There is nothing in the realm of operatic jollity that Montarsolo does not include in his vocabulary of mime, gestures of all sorts, and the whole range of vocal histrionics to complement them. His is the master's art.

He was equally valuable and had still greater room to show off in Rossini's first triumph. The slender story is about Slook, a kind of Canadian merchant, one step away from Daniel Boone. Arriving in Italy, he finds that the young lady he had expected to

marry is in love with a young man much more her type. He gives them his blessing and even makes the young fellow his heir. Montarsolo, as young Fanny's father, carries off his role's generous allowance of prosciutto with such style that it never oversteps the bounds of high style.

He is well supported by a cast headed by Elena Zilio as Fanny, Lajos Kozma (remembered for his excellent Orfeo) as Edoardo, Carmen La Vani as Clarina, and Attilio Burchiellaro as Norton. Giorgio Lormi valiantly replaced Angelo Romeo as Slook, though he is not the ideal voice or actor for the role. Guiding the entire evening, and providing it with incomparable style and zest, was the magistral hand of Fasano leading his superb musicians.

The double bill is to be repeated tonight.

