

"The Three Tenors"

This is the time of year when public television broadcasters, in their attempt to get us to give them money so they can buy us new programs, repeat old programs over and over, promising to stop only if we fork over some bucks.

Some programs have been successful fund raisers and have thus spawned sequels. Most notably the success of the operatic concert with the Three Tenors, gave us subsequent programs that included the Three Tenors II, Return to The Planet of the Three Tenors, and the Three Tenors On Ice.

But while we're on the topic: Is it just me. or do other people see similarity between The Three Tenors and The 3 Stooges.

Not that I imagine Placido Domingo gouging Jose Cararras' eyes or Pavarotti spinning around the floor in a big circle while singing "I'm the Barber of Se-ville, Nyuck.. Nyuck."

But there seem to be some interesting parallels between the Stooges and these opera stars.

I need to point out, and I know that it is unpopular to say this, but I do not like The 3 Stooges, and even as a child I never found them the least bit funny. While other children were doing that Curley falsetto "woo-woo-woo-woo " thing and causing retinal detachments by poking each other's eyes with their tiny little fingers, I was more interested in watching believable programs, like cartoons, where animals talked held down jobs and generally provided better role models.

But back to the Tenors. To me, Placido Domingo is the most "Moe-" like. He is clearly the leader and probably assigns all he arias. I would also suspect that when they all check out of a hotel room, which for some reason I oddly envision as a big single room where they share a three decker bunk bed, Domingo is the probably one who will settle up for all the extra charges with the people at the front desk.

Luciano Pavarotti is unquestionably opera's "Curley." He is the most popular, and with the exception of his beard, he and Curley are virtually interchangeable. Shut your eyes and picture Curley singing Tosca or Luciano getting smacked around by the others. I can almost hear Pavorati screaming in Italian "Moe, Larry, Il Frommagio."

Jose Cararras is the quiet one, generally thought to be the "Shemp" of the Trio and not recognized as a full partner by the others. I have just always taken for granted that there is as 40-40-20 split of everything including television rights and T-shirts, and Cararras is grateful when they give him anything.

Strangely, opera does not have a "Larry." Although if I were to choose one today, my vote would go to Joan Sutherland.

I'm happy that public television isn't threatening us during pledge week with a marathon of Stooze shorts, because all in all, I continue to find The 3 Tenors much funnier.

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