Spectacular opening to Early Music Festival

Handel's Te Deum conducted and directed by Nicholas McGegan, highlights the Boston Early Music Festival; reviewed on May 30; two further performances tonight and tomorrow at 8pm at the Boston College Theatre Arts Center in the end of the "80 Green Line; Handel's L'Allegro, Il Penseroso, ed Il Moderato, performed by Boston Camerata under Martin Pearlman, Jordan Hall, June 2.

"The singing, tasting, tasting, we reach through the sensation to an object, to a thing," writes Yvor Zuckerkandl in Sound and Symbol.

"Tone is the only sensation not that of a thing. In the case of color, hardness, odor, we ask, What is it that possesses the more, the hardness, the odor...? Sensations are one answer to the world as given. Seeing, touching, smelling, tasting, we respond to its physically, its materiality... Because music exists, the tangible and visible cannot be the whole of the given world. The intangible and invisible is itself a fact of this world, nothing over and counter, something to which we respond. Music, in Zuckerkandl's eye, opens the door to that which is intangible but essen-
tial, it "spies into the core of the phenomenon."

There are two composers in whose work we see this transcendent quality of music most compellingly illumina-
et: one is Mozart, the other Handel. When we listen to Mozart's characters we do not merely sense them; we become one with them. As Gagliano overcomes Dorabella in Il Finto furioso, as Cherubino reveals his yearnings in Il ve duo efigite, as the Countess reflects wistfully on a seemingly lost past in Don Giovanni, never letting a hopeful C major disguise the incapacity of the musical C minor, we cease to be mere observers. We become participants in a drama whose truth - elusive though it may seem in image, action, or word - is fashioned through tones which cannot lie. So it is with Handel's greatest charac-
ters. Among the more telling of Handel's later works one may pick out Jephtha which recounts the Old Testament story of the warrior who, having promised to sacrifice whatever he saw first on returning from battle, enforces first his daughter. The depth of recitatives such as "deeper and deeper..." or "Oh, hide them in the hated beams" cannot be surpassed. The listener senses (under the aegis of "di"
companion insepiotufrpi from which he cannot escape.

Teseo, completed towards the end of 1712, 39 years earlier, is clearly a less ma-
ifest work than its predecessor, which was indeed a "magic" opera, complete with elaborate sets and machinery, in the hope of repeating the success of Rinaldo the previous year. It is in many ways structurally clumsy, which makes for periods of boisterous, raucous, and chaotic flow; character studies are, nonetheless, perceptive, and none more so than that of Medea.

Perhaps the power of this role inspired Nancy Amberg to a performance of both brilliance and depth. Medea, like Mozart's Queen of the Night, is no stock character of "simple evil; there are many hints in the libretto that Mutter's Amberg laid on a display of superb vocal control to deliver the maximum take from every syllable of text. An angry battle in the orchestra marks the transition from jealousy to resolution. Arm-
strong's voice reveals the increased danger of Medea's determination in "O s'ingrato nem con". With a tightly modulated crystalline-clear black, she launches a "Fulsin of "D'oche con" "Stromenti, "ick ghosts are summoned to obscure and soften her rival, Aglaia. The 'ng arija, Sibilando, Uululando, was

Boston Early Music Festival Events

The Boston Early Music Festival Exhibition opens tomorrow at The Castle and the Boston Park Plaza Hotel, Columbus Ave and Arlington St. Musical instruments, books, rare printed manuscripts, and recordings will be on display 12:30 - 8pm through Saturday and 1 - 6pm on Sunday. Some highlights of the festival are listed below. For further information call 262-1240.

Today
8pm Handel's Te Deum will be performed at the Boston College Theatre Arts Center; Handelian scholar Winton Dean will precede the performance with a lecture on "Handel's Opera Today" at 6:30.

Tuesday
12:30 Exhibition opens.
8pm Trevor Pinnock harpsichord recital of music by Scarlatti and Handel, Jordan Hall. Final performance of Te-

Wednesday
8pm Bach's St John Passion, Jordan Hall.
8pm A Schubert Celebration, Jordan Hall.
8pm An ancient madrigal performed by Malta.

Friday
8pm Anner Bijoux and Malcolm Bills-
on give a Beethoven recital on cello and fortepiano.
11pm The Boston Camerata presents music of the German Renaissance at the Church of the Covenant.

Saturday
8pm Boston Early Music Festival Or-
chestra, conducted by Trevor Pinnock, Jordan Hall.
11pm Lea Doss and Members, Paul O'Dette and Malcolm LeRoi perform with Nigel Rogers, First Baptist Church.

Sunday
8pm Bach's The Art of Fugue, played by Bernard Lazago, Old West Church