

“JERRY SPRINGER” DIRTIES CARNEGIE HALL’S REPUTATION

In the last edition of *Catalyst* we mentioned that “Jerry Springer–The Opera” was coming to Carnegie Hall at the end of January for two nights. As we predicted, this grotesque production assaulted Christianity; it also dirtied the illustrious history of the hosting venue. The New York *Daily News* speculated that the musical used its two nights as a test for the prospects of a Broadway run.

The opera’s first act is a parody of the infamous “Jerry Springer Show,” while the second act depicts the TV personality in Hell attempting to play mediator between Jesus and Satan. In the musical, Christ is depicted as a fat, effeminate character who has his genitals fondled by Eve. The crucifixion is mocked, the Eucharist is trashed, and the Virgin Mary is introduced as a woman who was “raped by an angel.”

We wrote to each of Carnegie Hall’s corporate sponsors to voice our disapproval with the production. The most responsible response came from Bank of America. It made clear that it had no role in sponsoring the concert. To be exact, while Carnegie Hall did, in fact, rent its facilities to the offensive show, patrons of the famous New York musical hall did not sponsor this particular event. We are happy to report that Bank of America told Carnegie Hall that it wanted them to issue a public statement stating that its patrons had nothing to do with the Springer musical. It did so. Thus did Bank of America convey its concerns over this production.

Bill Donohue personally lauded the efforts of Bank of America when he appeared on “Fox and Friends.”

Besides the obvious disturbing images and material of the

opera, there was another element surrounding the play that displeased us. That element was the attitude of Max von Essen, an actor who played a transsexual in the musical. Von Essen conceded in an interview that he could see how someone might be offended by the content of the show. Nonetheless, he noted that they shouldn't be. He exclaimed, "I'm a New Yorker. I'm liberal and open-minded. Things don't really shock me." Apparently von Essen had such an open mind that he was not shocked at cultural assaults on someone's religion, even in instances when he did the trashing.

More than anything else, what the show celebrated was moral nihilism. At the end, it even voiced the theme: "Nothing is wrong and nothing is right" and "there are no absolutes of good and evil." This is exactly what the Nazis said in their defense at Nuremberg.

One can be sure that if this production finds its way to Broadway, we will stand directly in its path.