

SPRINGER'S "OPERA" COMES TO CARNEGIE HALL

On January 29 and 30, New York City's Carnegie Hall will be home to "Jerry Springer: The Opera in Concert." The production is ostensibly a spoof on the television chat show of which Mr. Springer is host. On his show, Springer trots out America's unfortunates and questions them about their family problems, sexual deviancies and emotional plagues. Tensions often flare between the guests, resulting in fisticuffs and occasional assaults with folding chairs.

The musical to run at Carnegie Hall surpasses the original in its vulgarity and obscenity. It also adds as much trashing of Jesus and the Blessed Mother as can be crammed into 120 minutes. The musical is set partially in Hell, thus opening the story up to include a "conflict resolution" segment between Jesus and Satan. A few of the "highlights" include: Jesus, fat, effeminate and wearing a loincloth, is accused of being a homosexual, to which he replies, "actually, I am a bit gay"; Eve, angry at being cast out of the Garden of Eden, reaches under Jesus' loincloth and fondles Him; the Virgin Mary is described as being "raped by an angel, raped by God"; Jesus sings, "I am Jesus, son of man, son of Mary, son of God. So...do not f-k with me."

All of this occurs among such story-lines as a man becoming sexually aroused by dressing up in a diaper and having his girlfriend treat him like an infant (the choir shrugs off this deviancy, suggesting, "For some morning Mass, for others hairy a-"), and a mother, wearing an oversized crucifix, informing her stripper daughter that she wishes the girl had died at birth. The musical's twisted moral is summed up in a speech given by the character of Jerry at the end: "Energy is pure delight. Nothing is wrong and nothing is right. And everything that lives is holy."

We've long noted that blasphemy often follows obscenity, and Jerry Springer's television show has given the musical's writers much material with which to work. What is unusual, however, is that Carnegie Hall would provide this vile production with a home. The hall's board and staff recently renewed its mission to "present the finest artistry" on its three stages. If "Jerry Springer: the Opera in Concert" is considered among the finest musical works in the entire city of New York, our society is in trouble for sure.

Let Sanford I. Weill, Chairman of the Board of Carnegie Hall, know what you think of his once-great institution wallowing in such filth. Write to him at 881 Seventh Avenue, New York, New York 10019-3210 or e-mail publicaffairs@carnegiehall.org.