

Maria Callas: Singing for the Feminine

by Margi Ross

When Callas was alive, there was much controversy about her singing: even when she was at the height of her powers. People loved the depth and expressiveness, the sorrow that was innate in her sound, but it wasn't perfect by masculine standards. Here indeed was a great voice and a very beautiful woman, but heard in relation to other great singers, such as Renate Tebaldi, who was the other leading soprano of the time, her voice was sometimes labelled as 'ugly'.

The True Feminine, which Callas was able to give a voice to, is never perfect by masculine standards, because the Feminine is an equal and opposite reality. The Feminine is perfect by Her own standards and the quality inherent in Her sound are attributes such as depth, truth, compassion, sorrow, inclusiveness, boldness, darkness (in a positive sense), feminine light, rage, transcendence. The Spiritual Feminine is both immanent and transcendent, so transcendence is not only a masculine attribute.

So, why does masculine creativity, both bad and good, dominate our culture? Let's go to the myth of Gaia and Uranus. In this story of creation, Gaia, the Earth, came from Chaos. Gaia had a son called Uranus and then mother and son mated and gave birth to the Titans. Uranus hated his children and shut them up in the depths of the earth. Gaia was furious and asked her children to help her avenge the wrong that had been done. Only Cronus (Saturn) agreed and he castrated Uranus. When his genitals were thrown into the sea Aphrodite was born: when the blood from his wound touched the earth, the Furies came forth.

What does this tell us about Callas and Feminine Creativity? If we are going to create for the Feminine we must not listen to the negative aspects of Uranus, and the negative masculine in general, *or else we will not value what we have created*. The myth tells us about the psychological level of the hatred that is innate between masculine and feminine approaches to life and form. The Mother Principle can hold and support the idea of a form that is not perfect. *She is trying for something else which is far more beautiful than the masculine idea of the perfect form and all Her creations are 'perfect'. She holds the soul.*

On a psychological level Uranus is the collective masculine pressure for perfection. When anything is not held by a strong human middle ground negative archetypal forces can come in. We can see how this archetype has dominated the idea of how the feminine physical body should be. Like a boy with boobs and the face of a baby: being a woman is not fashionable.

The philosopher Plato produced the idea that everything first existed as the 'perfect idea in the mind of God' and this was of course a masculine God. We don't look at trees and judge them as more or less perfect, why do this with other forms of Feminine Creation?

In the first part of the last century a woman called Alice Bailey had the job of writing down some new spiritual information for us. According to the Alice Bailey Teachings, there are seven different ray energies which express through and in people and other forms of life: Ray 1 is Will, Ray 2 is Love-Wisdom, Ray 3 is Active Intelligence, the Holy Spirit. Ray 4 is Art and Harmony through Conflict, Ray 5 is

Concrete Science, Ray 6 is Devotion and Ray 7 is Ceremonial Magic. Ray 1 is the equivalent to God the Father, in the Christian tradition, Ray 2 to God the Son and Ray 3 to the Mother Principle, God the Holy Ghost, or Spirit. Everyone has a spirit, a soul and a personality and as we evolve we are gradually able to express more and more of our soul and our soul is expressive of our spirit. The spirit, the highest aspect of a person can be Feminine or Masculine, as can their soul.

Callas had a 3rd Ray soul****. People often associate 3rd Ray energy, the Mother Principle, with matter and consequently assume that spirit is masculine and matter is feminine but behind matter is spirit, the Feminine Spirit. The names for Her change from one age and culture to another. She has been called, Nut, Isis 3rd Ray energy is a name for the Aquarian Age. On the level of the soul, 3rd Ray energy is expressive of the compassion of the Mother, *the eternal beauty and compassion that has always existed but is now becoming manifest. Thus, through the spiritual aspects of the Feminine, expressing through individuals and supported by the Holy Spirit, Her nurturing, caring and humanising compassion can come into every walk of life. It will take some time, but it will come in.*

In Callas's singing, one of the things that is so exceptional is the range of expression of the different aspects of the Feminine. She truly has the dark, the light and the middle ground integrated. Very few people have that sort of movement integrated in their lives. This is because it is a problem inherent within the Feminine and it is through human effort that the contrasting aspects are reconciled.

With the recordings of Callas some of the best are those that show this range of expression. The music of Bellini and Spontini was perhaps best suited to her voice because there was the opportunity to hear her express both the delicacy of soul, and the power of the Mother Principle. *

The pure sorrow of the soul is best heard in Puccini's music. In the radio play 'Spoonface Steinberg' by Lee Hall, all the recordings played were by Callas. The voice of sorrow was also the voice of hope, and this was also the message of the play. **

In Erich Neumann's book 'The Great Mother', in the chapter on spiritual development, he describes how the highest achievement of the Feminine is the birth of Feminine Light. *** Callas shone with this light.

To carry this light in the world we have to make a drastic separation out of a masculine system with masculine values and create our own structure to hold this light of compassion for what can be and will be. The Old Feminine is based in biology and male-female attraction and love for an individual man and physical children, the highest aspects of the Feminine are based in parthenogenesis (the ability of the Feminine to give birth from itself without help from a male): to give birth to a totally different Light, which balances the Masculine Light, then peace can come to the world and the World Heart can at last find Her place consciously in life.

* Callas recordings: Bellini: I Puritani.
Bellini: La Sonnambula.
Spontini: La Vestale.

** Lee Hall: Spoonface Steinberg. Available on cassette from the BBC. A play about a child who is dying from cancer. It was later made into a television play.

*** Erich Neumann: The Great Mother. Princeton University Press.

**** See list in book by Benjamin Creme: Maitreya's Mission. Vol 1. Share International Foundation.

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