How Can You Be True to Yourself?

A Dramatic & Musical Event!

This matinee of drama and music—of sweeping entertainment and urgent knowledge—asks and answers the biggest question for America and every individual man and woman: How can you be true to yourself?

Raging deeply and most often unclearly in everyone are these related questions, articulated by Aesthetic Realism: Is there such a thing as the best thing in me? What is it? How can I have it win? And what in me is against being true to myself?

This presentation will illustrate the following principle, stated by Eli Siegel: “All beauty is a making one of opposites, and the making one of opposites is what we are going after in ourselves.” To be true to ourselves, we need to see that we are not just our self: we are self and world—we are related to everything. And our purpose in everything we do, from kissing to talking to a friend, should be to be fair to that world of people and things different from us, to know it and care for it. This aesthetic criterion for being true to oneself applies to a nation—to America—as it applies to a person.

The big interference with being true to ourselves, Mr. Siegel showed, and the cause of all the unkindness in history, is contempt, “the addition to self through the lessening of something else.”

What Is Individuality?

A Dramatic Presentation of Eli Siegel’s Lecture on Sudermann’s Magda

In 1966, Eli Siegel, the greatest of critics, discussed Hermann Sudermann’s intense play of 1893. Magda, he explained, is about a fight in every person right now: between sincerity—finding out what you really feel—and going by what is called convention.

Love, convention, art, the family, including a father who wants to own his daughter: the character Magda is trying to make sense of all these. Through high drama, compelling scenes of great beauty, this presentation shows that real individuality is not what people have taken it to be—a contemptuous separation from the world. Mr. Siegel explains:

What is individuality or self? What relation does it have to everything else? The biggest thing in ethics is that when the self is seen most deeply, it is the same as the world—the world of all time and space—not the narrow provincial manners of Germany in the 1870s, or Nebraska in the 1880s, or Dublin in the 1830s, or Tel Aviv in the 1960s.

You will see what this loved concerto of Mozart is truly about, as you are stirred to your depths by music played with understanding new in history. Ms. Allen and Mr. Green say: “In the solo flute we feel a particular character—a little like Magda. It is tender and energetic, brave and hesitant, playful and serious. And this character is always in relation to the orchestra—which in its diversity of sounds stands for the world. Every measure of Mozart’s concerto affirms technically, richly: true individuality is relation.”

Mozart, Individuality, & You!

Mozart’s Flute Concerto in D

Commented on & performed by Barbara Allen (flute) & Edward Green (piano)

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In SoHo, off W. Houston

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