



MR. MUSIC BOX

An enigmatic box stands before a group of curious onlookers. Upon its front side is painted a decorated music stand with an opened score. Elegantly costumed operatic figures shimmer from behind the embellished notation. Do they indicate that a concert is about to begin? This surmise is supported by seven rows of seven nameplates, upon which can be read musical titles from highly varied genres: operetta melodies, Broadway classics, Gershwin tunes, traditional German songs, film melodies, rock oldies and international folklore. But why are they listed here, each song next to a golden button?

Amid murmuring speculation a button is tentatively pushed, and instantly the book of music flies open in front of the flabbergasted audience. There all of a sudden stands a tenor in white tie and tails, giving a full-throated rendition of the selected song *a cappella*: "It's Too Darn Hot!" And afterwards, just as abruptly as the box opened, its doors close once again. The guests laugh and clap, then press forward in a rush to choose the next title. Often someone exclaims, "Well, I've never seen anything like that in all my life!"

Between George Frederick Takis and his listeners there begins a lively interchange whose rhythm is impelled onward by the opening and closing of the doors. One compelling aspect lies in the wild succession of titles: after rock-'n'-roll a tender love song, "Santa Lucia" between "Summertime" and "Life is a Cabaret." Each individual mood is savored, then yields to the next melody in a zigzag of pushed buttons. The jollity of the guests grows from song to song: they urge each other to step forward, then amuse themselves with guessing what selection will be made by their colleague or family member bent over in thoughtful scrutiny.



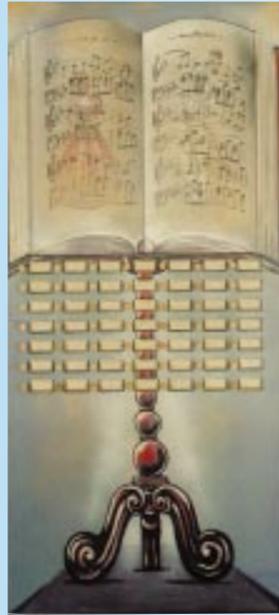
The jukebox becomes the focus for a communal feeling that, in the case of well-known titles such as "Yesterday" or "Singing in the Rain," often leads to spontaneous group singing. The guests standing in a half-circle in front of the tiny stage behave with light-hearted hilarity. Do these high spirits come from the childlike mirth with which they press the buttons? As in a game of hide-and-seek, the entertainer appears and disappears like a jack-in-the-box. The buttons and doors awaken a playful urge in the adults to repeat this simple procedure again and again.



Yet the person who readily communicates "Your wish is my command" is not a mere toy but rather a classically trained singer performing the desired songs with a warm, lyrical tenor voice. He enters into a momentary but profound relationship to each individual whose favorite song he presents. Some listeners associate certain melodies with private memories that are suddenly revived. For all of the audience, it is uncustomary and sometimes quite moving to be serenaded at so close a distance. The forgoing of musical accompaniment gives stark prominence to the singer's voice and enhances the intimacy of the moment.

The peculiar charm of this human jukebox lies in an admixture of humor and musical talent. The tenor has fun surprising the audience in several ways: first through his unexpected emergence, then through the unanticipated skillfulness of his musical presentation. With a sly wink he pursues this play within a play, imitating a machine that itself reproduces the human voice. This twofold mirroring offers several modes in which George Frederick Takis can stand before his audience: sometimes the mechanical aspect causes amusement, at other times the masterful singing engenders fascination. For years his calling card carried a motto in Latin: *Carmen de carcere surgit* - "The song arises from the prison cell." The words describe, not only the teasing transformation of the tenor into "Mr. Music Box," but also the free and easy mood imparted to his audience.





Repertoire

HUMAN JUKEBOX

ROCK OLDIES

Downtown
Bye-Bye Love
Yesterday
Needles And Pins
Hush
Love Potion Number Nine
I'm Leaving On A Jet Plane



OPERETTA MELODIES

Immer nur Lächeln
Wolgalied
Gern hab' ich die Frau'n geküßt
Ich bin nur ein armer Wandergesell
O Mädchen, mein Mädchen
Da geh' ich zu Maxim
Wie mein Ahnl zwanzig Jahr

GERMAN FOLKSONGS

Ännchen von Tharau
Guten Abend, gut' Nacht
Heidenröslein
Am Brunnen vor dem Tore
Mein Mädal hat einen Rosenmund
Ade zur guten Nacht
Der Mond ist aufgegangen

GERSHWIN HITS

Summertime
A Foggy Day
Let's Call The Whole Thing Off
I Got Rhythm
Swanee
Fascinating Rhythm
They Can't Take That Away From Me

BROADWAY SONGS

Maria
The Phantom Of The Opera
On The Street Where You Live
I'll Never Fall In Love Again
Smoke Gets In Your Eyes
It's Too Darn Hot
I Get A Kick Out Of You

FILM MELODIES

Cheek To Cheek
Life Is A Cabaret
Singing In The Rain
Moon River
True Love
Sonny Boy
Alexander's Ragtime Band

INTERNATIONAL FOLKLORE

Loch Lomond
Eileen Aroon
Au Clair De La Lune
Santa Lucia
Molly Malone
Swing Low, Sweet Chariot
Funiculì - Funiculà