

**Musicarnival Scores with “Baby Doe”** from *Cleveland Press*, Tuesday, September 9, 1958  
By Frank Hruby, Music Critic

Musicarnival takes its annual dip into the waters of opera this week with the presentation of Douglas Moore’s “The Ballad of Baby Doe.”

Last night’s colorful performance showed once again that the tent people out in Warrensville Heights do not test the temperature with a tentative toe—they plunge right in, and with quite a splash, at that.

Beverly Sills as Baby Doe sets her heart on Horace Tabor’s dough during her first 30 seconds on stage and falls in love with the man, capturing both him and the audience for the rest of the evening.

She brings to the role her vibrant voice and appealing personality, well blended with a sure knowledge of the stage.

Walter Cassel played the role of Horace Tabor, a role he created at the opera’s world premiere two years ago. It is a pleasure to watch and hear this seasons singer work, with his full baritone, extraordinary diction and expert characterization.

Margery Mayer as Augusta, Tabor’s first wife, does well with the peculiar role which comes the closest to being the villain of the piece, and manages to win a good deal of sympathy in the part. She was occasionally overpowered by the orchestra.

Beatrice Krebs, William C. Boehm, and Howard Fried brought their many vocal and dramatic talents to bear on lesser roles.

Wayne Mack took the part of William Jennings Bryan of the silver voice and sterling persuasion, and one wonders how he could possibly have lost the election.

Musically the opera is an outstanding contribution to the newly rising American efforts in that line. Storywise the 20-year span of history lacks urgency and it cries for something to happen right now.

Musicarnival’s production solves most of the in-the-round problems quite satisfactorily, and Boris Kogan directs the music and musicians in a comprehensive manner.

The stage pieces and sets are cumbersome and confusing, however, quite definitely straying from the theater’s policy of light and unobtrusive décor.