

"TWELFTH NIGHT"

Sir,—In the early thirties, an eccentric producer named Terence Gray gave at Cambridge, England, a series of productions of Shakespeare, whose oddity has enshrined for them a permanent place in theatrical histories. In *As You Like It*, Rosalind wore jodhpurs and Celia was dressed as a Girl Guide; in *Twelfth Night*, Sir Andrew and Sir Toby were on roller skates; and the end of *Henry VIII* was made an historic occasion by the stage revolving at high speed, the infant Elizabeth finally being flung into the laps of the audience. One would imagine from Dr. Pocock's letter than Mr. Campion and Terence Gray are brothers under the skin. I suggest that, if we are considering *Twelfth Night* alone, this view is a calumny which I must rebut with some vigour. For *Twelfth Night*, as done by the New Zealand Players, seemed to me to be a considerable advance on their production of *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, and in unity of conception and rhythmic flow, perhaps their most distinguished achievement. I did not find the evidence of "ersatz poetry of the theatre" of which Mr. Bertram complained, though I have found it in several other productions, and have pointed it out in this and other journals. It is therefore my duty to say that in *Twelfth Night* the text was primary throughout, and technical effects subordinate. There were at least three highly individual performances.

Dr. Pocock, from a position which can hardly be termed a vantage point for viewing this production, has been pleased to amuse himself at Mr. Campion's expense. I would point out that in Mr. Campion's production of *Hamlet* some years ago, Elsinore lacked both a goldfish pond and a wicker diving bell, and the Miserere was not heard. It was perhaps unwise of Mr. Campion to express himself in print, for his production stood as an effective rebuttal to the "ersatz" view. Let me then get in a last thrust. Shakespeare now, is not Shakespeare then. There are scenic and technical effects available now which in the 16th century had to be suggested verbally. I see no objection to such effects if they are incorporated into the shape of a text, and do not dominate or distract. In his production Mr. Campion, in my view, achieved this delicate relationship.

BRUCE MASON (Wellington).

Sir,—Dr. John Pocock is to be congratulated on having said so well what many of us have thought. Mr. Campion very obviously does not put the word first: does not, in fact, consider the dramatist the most important person in the theatre. With a good many plays, especially modern plays, such an attitude seems legitimate. But, as Dr. Pocock points out, a producer who holds this opinion can never achieve a successful interpretation of true dramatic poetry. Mr. Campion does not "disparage the word"; but he does fail to realise its importance and its possibilities. Plays without "good lines," he says, are "arid." I am tempted to go further, and say that they are not plays at all.

Generalisations about great artists are always dangerous, and I must try to avoid them myself. But if we do agree with Mr. Campion that "Shakespeare's mature plays are great because of their revelation of man," we may yet object to his implied disparagement of Shakespeare's poetry, which he achieves by putting inverted commas around the word. The poetry of the theatre is not ephemeral, and Mr. Campion has no

LETTERS FROM LISTENERS

right to call the lover of poetry a "dilettante." Surely poetry is something not only created but creative, something that has value and meaning in and for itself, something that lives and goes on living. The poetry of Shakespeare's dramas is not some kind of stage property, not a form of verbal costume for the actor to slip into for an hour or two. Shakespeare's revelation of man is in his poetry; his poetry is his drama.

WAYLAND (Christchurch).

YOUR CHILD AT SCHOOL

Sir,—I have been interested in this correspondence, but it took J. C. Martyn to get my back up. No one expects any teacher to completely develop the whole child. But is there any reason why he should impede the process of growth and development? All educators try to do is to apply sensible psychological principles which were only vaguely recognised under the old system. The process of education has been going on in a normal fashion for five years when the child enters the school. His natural learning methods have taught him how to walk, speak and perform other useful functions. Why should the teacher discard the methods which have proved satisfactory up to this stage?

Because a child must enter an adult world which by and large is based on false values does not mean teachers must make him a more efficient carnivore in this jungle. Let society learn from the new generation of children. Finally this thought: J. C. Martyn, among others, learned to walk under the new educational system. I'll bet he's better at this than at Latin.

R. J. MAGUINESS (Tututawa).

STAYING ALIVE

Sir,—Your entertaining and delicately ironical editorial on the above subject prompts me to suggest that maybe one secret of staying alive is to arrive at the point where you don't care whether you stay alive or not. This may be one of the compensations of age. In youth and maturity we are prisoners of mental and emotional stimuli and dazzled by dreams that tend to make living intensely worth while. But the robber years filch from us those things we value most and presently we arrive at the time when life has no more horizons. Then, surveying our pilgrimage, realising that in spite of all the key to the mystery of life is still missing, we arrive at serenity by contemplating passing hence, to be done for ever with the fevers and frustrations of this life, to rest in oblivion for ever, and ever, and ever, or—who knows? During my personal spin I have been through quite a collection of physical and mental "isms," and done my share of all those things which we ought not to do and left undone those which we ought to do. I continue to stay alive because, as indicated above, I don't care whether I do or not, but while I do, education, environment and my own standards lead me to carry on and gather such rosebuds, affections and felicities as may be mine along the way.

J. MALTON MURRAY (Oamaru).

MUSICAL PROGRAMMES

Sir,—I wish to endorse the remarks of J. Edmonds and H. Burton on 2YC's dinner music programme. It seems unnecessary to me that, as 2YA also broadcasts a similar type of programme be-

tween 6.0 and 6.25 in the evenings, 2YC should do likewise. In these months of Parliamentary broadcasts, listeners outside Wellington often have 2YC only from 5.0 to 7.30 p.m., of which 5.15 to 5.45 p.m. is the children's session, and from 6.0 to 7.0 p.m. dinner music of an inferior type. From 7.30 p.m. the programme is lost during Parliamentary broadcasts. Do you not think it right, Sir, that 2YC should broadcast good music between 6.0 and 7.0 p.m. in part compensation for this?

Also, could not *The Listener* revert to the custom of quoting conductors after orchestral items advertised? It makes a big difference in, for example, Handel's "Water Music" Suite where the London Philharmonic Orchestra has recorded it under Harty, Cameron and van Beinum, to know just which recording is to be played.

This evening (April 17), Bartok's Music for Strings, Percussion and Celeste was played by the Philharmonia Orchestra (no conductor according to *The Listener*). After the work had been played, it was announced by its title only (no orchestra or conductor), so we are no better off. Could you please tell me who the conductor is as there is no reference to it in the latest Record Guide either? A small point perhaps, but it means a lot.

J. F. LYON (Wanganui).

(The performance of Bartok music by the Philharmonia Orchestra, broadcast from 2YC on April 17, was conducted by Herbert von Karajan. Conductors are frequently named in programme entries, but sometimes space forbids it, especially on the "Highlights" page.—Ed.)

HUNTING POETS

Sir,—J.C.M. will be disappointed to learn that his verses are perfectly intelligible. But if, having delved into his subconscious, he finds the result incomprehensible, let him not leave the explanation (as he suggests) to his psychiatrist. Lucky, dense-headed fellow, he has no need, and never will have, of such services. FEATHER BONNET (Christchurch).

MICROPHONES

Sir,—For the second time in as many weeks I have listened to recorded programmes by a visiting organist, only to have my pleasure spoiled by atrocious recording. If this was an isolated incident it would not be quite so bad, but in my opinion and that of a number of people with whom I have discussed this matter, such is not the case. The fact is that many locally produced programmes suffer from a lack of crispness and clarity, the sibilants usually being missing, as can be noticed immediately if one listens and compares BBC broadcasts and local announcements; and musical programmes, particularly the National Orchestra, lack the brilliant highs that are heard on the better LPs broadcast.

During a recent overseas visit I listened to many broadcasts and the comparison on return to New Zealand was most striking. There is no doubt that the Broadcasting Service has fallen far behind current practice. Technically, one can ignore local broadcasts, one is forced to rely on one's own recordings or those LPs transmitted by the local YC.

The fact that recordings sound quite good on the air means, I imagine, that the trouble lies in New Zealand studios or microphones. The halls used in Germany seem no better acoustically than

many local halls, so presumably the microphones are at fault. Let us hope that better ones will be used, even if they have to be imported.

STUDENT (Wellington).

(1. If, as is to be inferred, the reference is to two programmes recorded by Gerald Knight, the balance of one recording was affected by the unavoidable need to transfer the performance, at short notice, from the church where full recording preparations had been made to another. 2. The microphones used throughout the Service are used as standard high-fidelity equipment throughout the world.—Ed.)

"THE WHITE CARNATION"

Sir,—Alas, poor B.E.G.M., that he was unable to enjoy and appreciate *The White Carnation*. Personally, I found it a delightful fantasy most competently done. It kept me at the radio when I should have been on my way to meet a train (fortunately late).

Bravo, William Austin! Bravo, NZBS! Bravo, all round!

J. J. BALDWIN (Wellington).

"THE SUNLIT HOUR"

Sir,—How extremely distressing and embarrassing for us women are the hysterical outcries of outraged feminists in your correspondence columns of late. Sceptical males all over the country who had never really forsaken their traditional patronising attitude towards female intellectual endeavour are shrugging their shoulders and exchanging quizzical smiles in the most maddening way.

A mere man has dared to criticise a woman artist's work and even suggested that women as artists may have their own special problems to cope with—their emotional situation may not be quite identical with that of the male artists. Preposterous! We do not agree—plainly the man means we are inferior and equally plainly that we must defend ourselves. But not by logical analysis of the speakers' words, of course, nor by reasoned argument. These are weapons of masculine intellect (sometimes!). Women have centuries of experience (mainly domestic) in another method. Take a strong conviction (not necessarily correct), express in highly toned effective words and phrases. Add some vague assertions and a few sweeping generalisations, exaggerate madly and serve quickly without too much thought.

My relief that at least one of the correspondents has said her last word on the subject is beyond measure. May I recommend to her Susan Stebbing's excellent book, *Thinking to Some Purpose*, before she embarks on the defence of any other member of her sex (and mine)?

FEMININE ANTI FEMINIST

(Oamaru).

(This correspondence is now closed.—Ed.)

ADDICT

Sir,—This morning, April 9 (not first), I took *The Listener* from the bulldog clip in which it hangs beside the wireless, and opened it at page 14. There was a young weta, his face pressed closely to five down on the Crossword, the ends of his sensitive antennae placed carefully on the corresponding clue above. And yet there are people who say the Crossword is too hard!

WET WEEKEND (Auckland).

ANSWERS TO CORRESPONDENTS

W. F. Chubb (Thames): Sorry, too late. *Crying Out Loud* (Te Puke): Too discourteous for publication, but many thanks.

Mrs. J. Hankey (Wanganui): 1, 1915; 2, 1908; 3, both 1913; 4, 1920 and 1914; 5, 1919 and 1911.