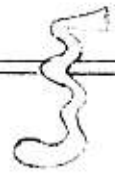


MERRY CHRISTMAS!



HAPPY NEW YEAR!

The Blow

By Seminarians for Seminarians

BLOW STAFF

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The Lark

Last Wednesday night St. Joseph's College was treated to the House Production of "The Lark." I say treated because I thoroughly enjoyed every minute of the play. It wasn't an easy play to stage. The action of the story was very little help. Everything depended on the actors' ability to get their characters across to the audience. Because they did this so well, I felt "The Lark" was one of the finest plays St. Joseph's has had since I've been here.

The characters were well cast. Lord Warwick, handkerchief in hand, was struttingly portrayed by George Doub. The ingenuity and vigor of Bob Carroll as Charlie the Dauphine was amazing and captivating. From the minute he opened his mouth, I hated Jim Purcell. He, however, was destined to be outdone in the second act by the condemning, damning Head of the Inquisition. Mangini, with his black cassock and capes dramatically swirling, was almost diabolic. Gil Mata was a convincing prelate. I thought his overall interpretation was good, but I didn't feel he showed fully the conflict which was supposed to be within him. I could run through quite a few adjectives to describe the acting of Tom Sheehan. Certainly I have never seen an actor down here who interpreted a difficult role with such imagination and power.

Jim Morris, Jim Riordan, and John Osness made their appearances on the stage memorable. I enjoyed the "handsome, intellectual" squire. I liked the gallant onion chewing, I ducked when the father of Jeanne d' Arc took that swing at his daughter.

"The Lark" has good and bad parts as far as its acting-out is concerned. Because it lends itself to being put on in the round, Larry Jacobs was able to gain much better audience contact. One of the most difficult aspects of the play as Larry explained was that the climax comes early. The scene when Jeanne takes back her recantation when talking to Warwick in prison is the climax. It was necessary after that to rush the play to a conclusion so that it wouldn't drag. Too many type characters presented another problem. Larry had to get together with each actor to give him a definite and effective interpretation of his part. So many other problems besides these are thrown on the director. I felt that Larry handled everything calmly and with good judgement.

Tom Sheehan found Jeanne an easy character to portray. He liked the idea of the emphasis on Jeanne as a young peasant girl rather than the maid in shining armor. The most difficult scene for him was the one between Jeanne and Charlie at the end of the first act. Here Jeanne was dealing with a sharp mind and it was hard to convince the audience that Jeanne really won him over.

Because "The Lark" is an allegorical play, Cauchon and the Lord Inquisitor take on parts different from true history. The Inquisitor was actually an old man who was just desirous of getting the trial over, and Cauchon was the man who actually pushed for Jeanne's condemnation. In "The Lark" however, Jeanne represents True France. Cauchon is the vischy government. When Cauchon is vacillating in the play between Burgundy and France, it stands for the Vischy government vacillating between France and Germany.

Finally great thanks from the community are due Father Kalkman. He proved his point that the students will like a play on a higher level if it is done well enough.

I don't think that I will soon forget "The Lark."

by J. Harrington

A Visit With Father Girard

When Tom Sheehan told me that Fr. Girard wanted to see us in his room, I hesitated. What do you say to the head of a Society, especially when he doesn't speak English? I was wrong to hesitate because after five minutes with him we were talking like long-lost cousins and we were still going strong an hour later. A second talk only showed how little time we had with him, but still I came away from those talks with two distinct impressions.

Father Girard is the most unaffected man I have ever met. At our first Tete-a-Tete a hearty hand-shake sufficed for the formalities. In questioning us on all aspects of seminary life - he was especially interested in knowing whether we thought we were being properly trained for the priesthood - he was interested in all our answers. Not once in our conversation did he even smile at our fractured French, though I'm sure we set the language back ten years. At the end of our first talk he told us to come back anytime and instead of the customary "au revoir" he said "a tout a l'heure" which means "see you later."

When we had exhausted our

meager vocabularies he gave us his disarmingly honest opinions and observations, accompanying them with the characteristic French gestures. He was quick to praise our choir and liturgical zeal. While discussing the liturgy he added a word of warning that leads to my second impression.

Fr. Girard is one of the most sensible men I have ever met. His remarks on the liturgy exemplify my point. The liturgy is the prayer of the Church and is intended to serve the Church. Who then is better qualified to decide how the Church should be served than the Church herself? Therefore it is important to obey the Church in these matters, otherwise we would have everyone going off on diverging paths, or as Fr. Girard so aptly put it, we would have "la Cacophonie", or "cacophony" and the liturgy would cease to be a prayer.

As I think back to those discussions with Father I see a man who can make you feel at home despite a foreign language, a man who has little use for protocol in his office. Here is a shepherd scarcely concerned with his sheep. Here is a priest with a keen mind and a big heart.

Gil Meta

LANGLAIS MASS

by Bill McClure

Two weeks ago, on the feast of the Immaculate Conception, the elite Poets and Rhets, who inhabit the balcony section in chapel, were asked to move their places downstairs for High Mass. Liking my panoramic view of the altar, and dreading the mixing with the rabble, I wondered what the occasion was. Someone said something about a Langlais Mass and it was left at that.

The beginning of High Mass went along per usual. But at the Kyrie, Paul Perry made sounds come out of the organ I had never heard before. Then I realized that if we were still upstairs, we would have been blasted out of our seats. The choir started. The Kyrie was the most startling and moving ever sung in our chapel. Then came the Sanctus and Agnus Dei, each sounding more beautiful than the last.

After Mass everyone was talking about Langlais. No one really knew who he was, but his Mass was sure something. That everyone knew.

Well, the Mass that the choir did such a fine job on, is Missa Salve Regina written by Jean Langlais. It was composed for the televising of Midnight Mass at Notre Dame Cathedral in Paris on Christmas 1954. It was written primarily for congregational participation. Abbe David Jubin, musical director of televised religious programs in France always wanted to have the congregation take part in a polyphonic Mass. The Abbe asked Master Jean Langlais to compose such a Mass and Langlais agreed. He wrote the whole Mass, including a simple folio of vocal lines the faithful were to use, in two weeks! And what is more astounding - Langlais is totally blind.

In discussing the Langlais Mass with Father Olivier, I found that what we had heard that morning as a masterful whole, was in reality three or four musical themes of the Salve Regina. Various combinations and uses of these themes created the unity and continuity we heard.

The whole atmosphere of the Mass made me think I was back in the middle ages. The music is a throwback to the Gothic period and therefore, it is best performed in Gothic structures like Notre Dame. The resonance of those tall, large buildings, with their echoes and reverberations, contributes to the excitement and color of the music.

As Father Olivier pointed out, the Langlais Mass couldn't be done on ordinary Sundays or Feasts. It's a trifle too long and elaborate. The long organ interludes, which build up enthusiasm and expectation for the texts, take time, like the great preparation for "Hosanna in excelsis." But for big feasts when the movement of ceremonies is more formal, the atmosphere more festive, and the people expect a more extended stay in church, the Langlais Mass is ideal.

As we realized, the Langlais Mass is difficult to perform. As a matter of fact, it's impossible to do without an expert, well-practiced and sympathetic choir, and a first-rate organist with taste and imagination. Fortunately, St. Joseph's is blessed with both.

The Langlais Mass we heard on Dec. 8 was a beautiful piece of work, masterfully directed and artistically sung. Only its encore at Christmas Midnight Mass in the Cathedral could be better.

T.V.'s Newest Dilemma

Charles Van Doren, Bert Koplin, producer of \$64,000 question, and those others involved in the fixed quiz shows are now being overshadowed by another controversial creature: a gaudy idol resplendent in gaudy lights and electronic devices, and idol worshipped by the whole television industry. It is called the rating system.

Three companies: Nielsen, Trendex, and American Research Bureau each make nationwide ratings on the basis of "representative" viewers. Of the forty-five million homes that have television, Nielsen contacts 1,050; Trendex, 1,000; and A.R.B., about 2,100.

Although the three companies frequently disagree about the rating of a single show they give information about the status of most programs. This information dictates what shows will live through the season and what types of programs will replace discontinued ones.

The rating system has recently been condemned by television critics on two counts: first, they are not scientifically sound; second, they have lowered the standards of the television industry.

"Never has a huge industry," states T.V. critic John Crosby, "been so hopelessly cowed by a set of cold, hopelessly unreliable, totally meaningless numbers... A statistician has ever been able to explain to me why, if one Republican dentist from North Dakota is listening to a speech, all other Republican dentists are assumed to be listening to Hope."

There have been a few instances when the ratings weren't too much help to producers. "I Love Lucy" and the "Howdy Doody Show" pulled in millions of viewers, but they didn't sell their product. The sponsors were completely satisfied with the modest audience that tuned in N. B. C. for the

"Voice of Firestone". But N. B. C. wasn't satisfied. The rating system showed that this modest audience was all that stayed around for the next program. The network claimed that the "Voice of Firestone" ruined the whole evening and so they dropped it.

It's easy to show that the rating system has flooded our T.V. sets with a lot of mediocre talent. If one show gets a good rating, a host of imitations are soon created. Check the T.V. Log during television's peak hours, seven to ten every night. Count how much of the time is divided among these three types of programs: westerns, musicals, and situation comedy.

Every once in a while the industry, as if to ease its conscience, has come up with some memorable entertainment. There has been fine drama like the recent "Oliver Twist," brilliant documentaries in many of the past "OmniBus" and "See it Now" shows, inspiring musical performances such as the opera "War and Peace". The public has enjoyed these exceptions and has asked that they be repeated. But these programs have never created a trend like the western or the crime show.

The Federal Communications Commission has recently opened hearings to discuss television programming and commercial practices. The F. C. C. will most likely spend some time on the rating system. It will be interesting to see what they have to say about it.

Van Haren, Ed.

The Decline of Boxing (Part I)

by William McClure

I think everyone has, at one time, watched a boxing match; whether you've tuned in the Friday Night Fights or crowded into a smoke filled auditorium. I also think that you'll agree that an exciting bout can be one of the most interesting spectacles in the world.

But, boxing isn't as popular as it was five or six years ago. In 1952, 58,000 people jammed into Yankee Stadium to watch Rocky Marciano kayo Joe Walcott. Last summer only 18,000 watched Patterson fight Johansson. Why has its popularity dropped? What does boxing need to make it healthy again?

I had the opportunity (and the \$4.50 necessary) to watch that Ingimar Johansson - Floyd Patterson fight this summer. In that history-making third round, the health of boxing was the furthest thought from my mind. At that time, I was on my feet, wildly cheering the new champion. But now that I look back, that fight was the answer to the question, what does boxing need.

Authorities on boxing like Nat Fleisher and Dick Young have often said that as "the heavyweight Championship goes, so goes boxing." After seeing Ingimar, I would agree that a colorful heavyweight champion will make boxing popular again. But I would add a promoter to take the place of the monopolies of the I.B.C. and Cus D'Amato.

Boxing has taken a tremendous drop in popularity since Patterson became champion in 1956. Why? Since Patterson became champ no sports writer has heard him grunt more than a "Yeah" or a "No." His manager, Cus D'Amato says everything for him. For example, after the Johansson fight, Floyd was asked if he saw the right hand which almost drove him through the canvas. Floyd started to answer, but D'Amato quickly interrupted saying, "No, Floyd never saw the right hand." Grumbling, the writers then asked Patterson where the punch landed. Again Cus butted in,

"On the mouth," he said. The writers then asked what they thought was a foolproof question. "How badly were you hurt by the punch?" Still Cus answered. "He was momentarily stunned." How does D'Amato know the answers to these questions? Was he in the ring? Yet Patterson might as well be a deaf mute for all D'Amato lets him say. Boxing has lost in popularity because the heavyweight champion has been a colorless puppet.

Now this Johansson has the makings of a colorful champ. He boldly prophesied to the world that "no one can stand up to my right hand, not even your heavyweight champion;" and he proved it. After he won the title, he told the press, "I will fight anyone who has enough nerve to step into the ring with me. I want people to remember me as a great champion." This is the kind of champion fans want and will pay to see.

If Ingo continues to be outspoken and colorful, fighting all comers, he will have to be heralded as one of the saviors of boxing.

The second result of that fight was that it knocked down Patterson's egotistical manager, Cus D'Amato, from his perch as would-be king of the hill. When D'Amato got control of the heavyweight championship, he started to feud with the I.B.C., trying to break up their monopoly. But after a while D'Amato in his loud-mouth crusade to reform boxing seemed to be set on replacing the dictatorship of the I.B.C. with the dictatorship of D'Amato. The operations of the International Boxing Commission did not always smell of roses, but neither did D'Amato's.

No matter how noble the end he wanted to achieve, it could not justify his tactics. For example, he labeled all

the major sportswriters of the country as "venal leeches of the I.B.C.," because they wrote that Patterson was afraid to meet either Falley or Machen. He operated as the undercover promoter of Patterson's fights, a direct violation to the boxing code. He attempted to force Johansson to accept a hand-picked American manager who hasn't been active for years and whose only apparent role was to collect ten percent of Ingo's money.

Only Cus knows if he was trying to clean up boxing or simply take it over. In either case, the sport will be better off with him in a lesser position. Maybe now the public can watch a few decent fights instead of listening to D'Amato make excuses. Cus may find this hard to believe, but people are more interested in fighters than they are in managers, or even crusaders.

I do not mean to infer that the backstage men aren't important. They are, if they're smart enough to stay where they belong.

One such man is Bill Rosensohn. Since D'Amato wouldn't let the I.B.C. promote his fights, Rosensohn got into promoting with D'Amato. Rosensohn was the young and ambitious person who promoted the Floyd Patterson - Roy Harris fight, before the Johansson - Patterson set-to. But because he was unable to stomach D'Amato's pushing, he split with Cus weeks before the big upset.

If Patterson had won, Rosensohn would have been out on his ear. As it is, he not only holds promotional rights to the rematch, but also figures to promote all of Ingo's U.S. appearances in the future. Traditionally, the man who promotes the heavyweight champion's fights is the man with the true power in boxing. If Rosensohn can seize this opportunity and extend his influence to other boxers and other divisions, he will be the man to take over and nourish the sport back to health. Rosensohn and Johansson could follow in the steps of Jacobs and Louis, Kearns and Dempsey. And the winner would be the sport of boxing.

