

Editorial

Tennis tourney needs overhaul

The Canadian Open is the world's third oldest national tennis championship, behind Wimbledon and the US Open, yet it still is not one of the major international tournaments. There are many Canadian tennis enthusiasts who feel our national championship deserves the limelight of international recognition.

In order to improve the stature of the Canadian tourney, the present format needs to be overhauled.

The Canadian Open currently takes a distinctly different route from other national tournaments by staging the men's and women's events in separate cities (alternating annually between Montreal and Toronto). The reason behind this approach is to provide the highest level of competition in two large population centres, offering tennis for spectators in both regions.

Tennis Canada is most concerned with promoting and exposing tennis to the greatest number of Canadians possible. They say that 'two tournaments are better than one,' and are thus hoping to develop greater public awareness and participation.

But the fact remains that the Canadian Open is considered by many of the players to be merely warm-up to the prestigious US Open held a few weeks later. We need a unified Canadian title that would not only perpetrate the growth of Canadian tennis but will also rightly place the Canadian Open among the world's great championships.

York University is now ready to accommodate a championship of such a stature. Toronto is the hotbed of tennis in Canada and would make such a tournament a success. The opportunity presents itself to host a world class event at York.

The typical Torontonion is about five feet, nine inches high, with fairly wide shoulders and a dolichocephalic head with an ear on each side of it.

—Stephen Leacock



AERIAL VIEW OF LATE SUMMER DONUT-SHOP MELANCHOLY

Letters

New sculpture reminds readers of tornado refuse

Editor:

Re: "New Sculpture Challenges Senses," *Excalibur*, July 23, 1985.

Should not the Central Ontario Disaster Relief Fund be notified to fund the removal of what looks like tornado refuse deposited just north of the Behavioural Sciences Building? It would appear that a tornado swept through a provincial park and relieved some poor American of his aluminum camper, leaving it like so much trash obstructing one of the few beautiful spots on campus.

Unfortunately it was confirmed that the tornado originated in the Art Gallery at York. We feel strongly that the York community should have been consulted on the selection of a more appropriate piece.

—S. Dickens, D. Parker, J. Spigel, D. Golberg, K. Erikson

Article misrepresents theories of Brecht

Editor:

Re: "Raucously wild *Tanzi* provides powerful contrast to dark anarchy of Brecht's angst-ridden *Baal* (*Excalibur*, July 22, 1985).

This generally courteous and well-reasoned review (incidentally a welcome change from the superciliousness of Jason Sherman's writing), contains several faults owing to a carelessness with the theories of Bertolt Brecht.

To begin with, Mr. Patterson leaves his readers with the dubious impression that Brecht's *verfremdungseffekt* ('alienation effect') has something to do with breaking down "the imaginary fourth wall." In fact, one has to look to Brecht's French contemporaries to find advocates of Theatre Passe Murailles' (beyond walls).

Mr. Patterson later refers to 'episches-theatre' (epic theatre) saying that it demands a "deliberate falseness" and "acting stilted and stylized." While these descriptions are nearly half-right, they would lead a reader who is new to Brecht to jump to some incorrect conclusions.

Brecht never sought "falseness" from his actors or, indeed, from art, but rather only truth. He saw the Stanislavsky approach to acting, which calls for artists to believe that which they know is merely a play (as well as that which they know is morally, aesthetically, or politically unacceptable) to be true, and for those same artists to lure the audience into accepting this fundamental lie as "real" ("the suspension of disbelief"). Brecht, instead, wanted actors to "show the play" to the audience, and implored them to be 'theatrical' (and therefore, honest) rather than pretending to 'real' (while lying through their teeth).

Mr. Patterson also commits a sin of omission against Brecht, *Baal*, and epischestheatre when he fails to mention the importance of "the short scenes separated by blackouts" and the play's use of significant (as compared to ornamental) songs. These two devices are essential features of epischestheatre, allowing a playwright to tell the story of a large number of people over a long period of time (the main requirement of an 'epic'). In Brecht's later plays these devices recur with much greater success, and have become his chief legacy (e.g. Joan Lilliwhite's *Oh, What a Lovely War*, the Canadian collective creations, including *The Farm Show*, and *Paper Wheat*).

These other bits of evidence aside, the lack of a clear understanding of Brecht is perhaps most starkly revealed by Mr. Patterson when he describes *Baal's* title character as "less than sympathetic." This comment alone should send the reviewer hurrying back to do more research, for a "sympathetic character" was simply anathema to Brecht, the most undesirable feature of the so-called "dramatic theatre" that he so despised. Brecht reasoned that given a sufficiently "sympathetic" actor/character (especially one who could provoke empathy, which is even more dangerous) an audience might be duped into accepting or at least giving an unacceptable level of credence to dangerous ideas (such as Nazism).

Of course, a reviewer could safely say that applying the fully evolved ideas of Brecht to *Baal* is apochryphal (though undeniably fascinating). I certainly would not have objected had this review made no mention of those ideas (indeed, theory as such need not come into the

discussion of any plays, by Brecht or otherwise). I do strongly feel, however, that if a rich body of ideas is to be brought into such a discussion, both it and its author should be paid the respect that is their due, which begins with accuracy.

—David Burgess

African starvation supercedes farmers' plight, reader says

Editor:

I am writing in response to Elliot Shiff's article entitled "Dylan reminds US Charity Starts at Home" in the July 23 edition of *Excalibur*. While most of what is said is credible, towards the end of the piece some ludicrous statements are presented.

Bob Dylan made an outrageous suggestion that some of the money collected for the starving in Africa be turned over to American farmers who are having problems with their mortgages. Elliot Shiff suggests that Dylan has done us a favor "by bringing things into proper perspective." That leads one to the conclusion that the problems faced by North American farmers are somehow, in some way comparably to the plight of the starving in Ethiopia. What a ridiculous thought. There is no possible way any comparison can be drawn between the Ethiopian problem and any problem faced by those of us in the Western world.

Farming is a business like any other and anyone who is unable to manage his business should not simply seek charitable donations. That is hardly a solution. They must adapt to changing times, as the other sectors of the economy have had to do; there should be no preferential treatment for farmers. The agriculture industry is no different from any other, the marketplace determines everyone's value and sometimes the truth hurts.

I maintain the money goes to the starving, not to those with banking problems. African suffering involves death, North American suffering, particularly farmers' financial distress, does not. To "skim off the top" a few million dollars would result in nothing less than the deaths of thousands and that would be criminal at the very least.

—James McCormack

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