

critics et al

We have critics in Montreal . . . Of course we have . . . every city has . . . there are newspapers, and readers . . . there are review passes . . . shows, plays, concerts, recitals . . . some of them, particularly the recitals, are none of your second rate stuff . . . there used to be an orchestra — for all reviewers . . . we still have an orchestra — with critics.

Telegraph editors . . . literary scholars . . . reporters . . . amateurs . . . a musician, good heavens! Nothing is good . . . life is futile . . . In all my fifty years . . . he ought to use a metronome . . . when I heard that in . . . now I played . . . catharsis . . . morbid . . . morbid . . . morbid again . . . magnificie—er morbid . . . innuendo within innuendo . . . adequate as we would like to hear it . . . Tallulah Bankhead . . . another British film, rah, rah . . . three cheers for Mickey Mouse . . . Hollywood copies Continental technique . . . surely there must be some faults.

Yes, we have theatrical and music columnists . . . excellent notice boards, these columns . . . everything reviewed again . . . another slam . . . another pat . . . what an intoxicating smell from printer's ink . . . the actor's lot is a hard one . . . the actor has a difficult job . . . disappointments many in actor's profession . . . the British film . . . an English Hollywood . . . Saxon Celluloids . . . what a fund of knowledge and information and food for thought . . . Criticism . . . knowledge and experience . . . hahaha . . . local musical topics . . . great contributions to Canadian music . . . we'll make the orchestra jealous yet . . . dear east-of-Guy-street, this is the greatest cultural opportunity of the year . . . you simply must not miss it . . . dear west-of-Guy-street, everybody will be there . . . you simply dare not miss it.

Criticism . . . a duty to the public . . . just like a newspaper's obligations . . . no vindictiveness . . . no personal aims . . . sincere beliefs . . . truth even before advertising contracts . . . no bias . . . no controlling interests . . . the criticised likewise . . . everyone is a sport . . . haw haw haw

But what is there to criticise? . . . surely not the great visiting artists . . . they are brought here because they are beyond criticism . . . what then the movies? . . . no use splashing in the ocean . . . the whale in Arctic waters won't feel it . . . ah, local stuff . . . collar wilting drama in the church basement . . . serious, wild eyed youngsters badly made up to look thrice their ages . . . strutting in three act farces that would make fair one act plays . . . oh dear, . . . opera . . . nunno, operetta . . . public gargling by vermillion faced heroes . . . sweet

young princesses . . . weighing 200 lbs. plus . . . race for volume . . . the accompanist wins . . . the most promising of young local pianists . . . really? . . . an instrumental ensemble . . . quite Gershwin-esque . . . No Don't pan them . . . spoil their ticket sale . . . \$2,000 . . . first night, you understand . . . sure, I'll

tell them . . . apologists to the public . . .

And how the public flocks . . . our dear-old Enesco came back . . . could he find room for himself in the hall? . . . sweep away the empty chairs . . . he may dance to the scherzo he plays . . . he may shut his eyes, for nothing will come in his way . . . not to be compared of course with student mimicry of Russian pathos . . . Calvacade, hurrah . . . the talking picture in its element at last . . . Sign of the Cross . . . bathroom . . . London String Quartet . . . their passion in their pockets . . . Iturbi . . . sure it is not puppy love, oh Montreal? . . . MRT, where art thou? . . . and yes, the orchestra . . . the orchestra? . . . er, the orchestra . . . but the Toronto critics never say anything bad about their orchestra . . .

Nor head nor heart . . . book standards . . . theory for experience . . . the public will believe blindly . . . or else it will disbelieve with equal stubbornness . . . one artist will read and ponder . . . fifty will glance and laugh derisively . . . an anti-romantic world gone sentimental . . . ego, nos, ego . . . effect . . . effect . . . affectation . . . truth?

revues and comedies

The editor of the black sheep was kind enough to give me space in which to shoot off my mouth about revues, of which I know nothing, and musical comedies, about which I know less.

Briefly, a revue is a panomphean presentation of polykaleidoscopic and callomphalic segments without exordium, catastasis, or catastrophe, with ithymbic intent designed for katabolic mongers; a musical comedy, on the other hand, is an Aristotelean comic tetrad of congruent dramatisations.

In case there should chance to be anybody who knows even less than I do about the matter, I may explain the foregoing by saying that a revue presents beautiful belly-buttons in a series of independent skits designed for the tired business man, while a musical comedy presents the same belly-buttons in an order imposed by the exigencies of a plot.

If I were going to write a musical comedy, I would not find it necessary to cater to the depraved tastes of a jaded public, I think there could be something fresh injected into a musical comedy without keeping the less intelligent members of the audience (aren't they all?) away.

The use of frequent recitatives was

well-known to the ancient Greeks. A group of people simultaneously reciting nice words with a few rhymes here and there, whether they are set to music or not, is always impressive. The easiest way to be "whimsical", "cute", "delightful", and such like, is by means of such recitatives. Gilbert and Sullivan is only a prolonged series of recitatives. There is nothing indelicate in Gilbert and Sullivan. They do not find it necessary to open their show with a tourist skit cribbed from the Ziegfeld Follies of 1915, 1916, 1917, 1920, 1927, 1929, 1930, and 1931. Amateur shows too often find it necessary to come down to the level of their audience with stolen and effete jokes, even when it is unnecessary.

The point I am trying to make, if there is any, and I hope there is not, is that it is unnecessary for amateur players to find it necessary, when they produce a musical comedy, to fill it with a lot of unmitigated hooey, buncombe, bologna, banana oil, applesauce, gibberish, balderdash, palaver, flummery, twaddle, fudge, trash, rubbish, moonshine, faddle, badardage, baragouin, naiseries, garbage, sewage, rubbish, junk, macaroni, farrago, and horsefeathers.