



BROADWAY POSTSCRIPT

O Brave Newley World!

IN THESE days when musicals are getting colder, louder, and faster, it is a pleasure to come across something like "Stop the World—I Want to Get Off." This new British musical hit, created by Leslie Bricusse and Anthony Newley, glows with theatrical imagination and ambles at its own pace with no apparent concern about commonplaces any objective observer might feel obliged to note.

For if one takes the magical mixture apart, the elements that have gone into this imported concoction can seem deceptively ordinary and borrowed. Furthermore, almost everything in the show is repeated so often that at times it appears to be a stage adaptation of "Old MacDonald Had a Farm."

Yet, if one puts oneself in the warm and skilful hands of its director and star, one finds oneself entertained, charmed, and even moved. Dressed as a clown, Mr. Newley enters Sean Kenny's gaily designed circus-tent arena (of which the audience forms the other half) and attempts a few half-hearted tricks which draw a negative response from the pretty young girls who are both his audience and his collaborators. There is for him, alas, no escaping the necessity of clowning through something a little more real, something that will define him and us; in short, a human life. So he mimes his way quickly through infancy and childhood to a point where his adult life begins to be specific. We then meet the clown-faced Mr. Littlechap, who employs a music-hall comedian's delivery—including that special variety of entertainer's willingness to use corny, and frequently dirty jokes and to play on the sentimental vulnerabilities of susceptible audiences—to describe how this ordinary Englishman gradually lets life "lumber" him into a restrictive conformity, and how each conformity leads him to success and social position. Poignantly at the end he complains to us that he has completely lost any identity of his own as he sings "What Kind of Fool Am I?"

Along the way, Mr. Littlechap also has a number of comeuppances which cause him to shout, "Stop the World!" But he always swallows the rest of the sentence in nasalized clown-talk that suggests he is rejecting drastic commitment. Like most of us he personifies the comic view of life, a view that incidentally becomes increasingly essential as the dangers of total destruction mount.

The score is catchy with the music seeming more married to emotional states than usual. "I Want to Be Rich" is a determined march; "Typically English" sounds all tea-and-crumpets, which makes its punch line all the more effective; "Lumbered" achieves full concussion by spelling out the title word letter-by-letter in mid-refrain; "Meilinki Meilchick" uses the novelty of the Russian phrase to permit a Britisher to express a maudlin sentiment; and "Once in a Lifetime" expands pleasure into ecstasy.

But the triumph of this musical lies less in the craft and substance of its text than it does in its utterly theatrical performance. Mr. Newley uses his versatility almost apologetically as he shuffles, jokes, and sings his way through incidents which keep taking him back to the center of the maze. What at first seemed repetitious to the audience gradually emerges instead as patterns that echo the futility of seeking variety.

No less expert is Anna Quayle who impersonates Littlechap's "typically English" wife, and the typically Russian, German, and American girls with whom he dallies. The most amusing is the latter, all breathless, innocent, and dumb.

Above all is the performers' fidelity to the notion of making everything happen out of the plain materials at hand: the circus tent, some visible lighting equipment, some simple melodies, and the other quail who attractively play at being whatever is required at the moment. By doing this it becomes "Total Theatre," in which the artist creates out of the theatre and its traditions, instead of out of applied psychology.

"Stop the World—I Want to Get Off" unashamedly borrows traditional techniques (just as Marceau borrowed from the purer Decroux, so Newley has borrowed from the purer Marceau) and melodies ("Going to Build a Mountain" sounds dangerously close to the traditional "Won't You Come Home, Jim Dooley?") and jokes ("We must throw out these old conservatives and put in some new ones" is but a variation of a familiar device). And it assumes the responsibility to carry through a theme once started even when it knows that it is going on too long. In short it has character, which is to say that it knows what kind of musical it is.

—HENRY HEWES.

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Book of the Week

Continued from page 22

the irrational can become supreme in human destiny. And his entire perspective on the present world crisis is bound to be altered.

For this book, without saying so explicitly, reveals how shallow are the men who cannot think beyond the ideological and national competitions that divide the world today, or beyond the thrust-and-counter-thrust of power blocs—men, in short, who don't know a human crisis when they see one. It becomes clear that the inability to comprehend the human situation today in other than we-or-they terms marks the prime failure of the age.

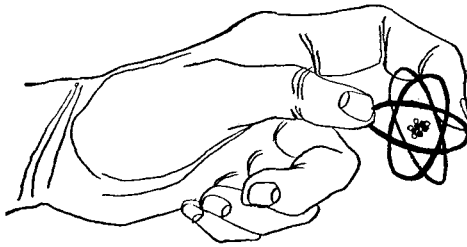
Could it actually happen? That is, is it conceivable that the very system designed to guard this nation against surprise attack could, through error or accident, result in nuclear disaster? Is the "fail-safe" mechanism prone to the kind of grisly failure dramatized in the book by Eugene Burdick and Harvey Wheeler? Inevitably, these are the questions that grow in the reader's mind as he becomes caught up in this book. I therefore telephoned Mr. Burdick at his home in Berkeley.

My first question to Mr. Burdick was whether the technical and scientific material in his book was authentic. He said he wanted to assure me that, while the book did not impart classified

information, it did represent a competent estimate of the technical and scientific factors involved in the "fail-safe" system.

The next question to Mr. Burdick: "Based on your knowledge of the 'fail-safe' system, what are the chances that the kind of accident you describe in your book could actually happen?"

His answer: "I believe it to be inevitable under the present circumstances. That is why we wrote this book. I don't know of a scientist who has a direct knowledge of 'fail-safe' who isn't worried. This is something people ought to know."



As a result of this book, a great many people are going to know. There is a strong probability, in fact, that it will be the most discussed book of the year. This is as it should be. Any book that gives people a glimpse of reality in our time is a precious commodity in the world. And this is one case where the value of a commodity increases, not decreases, with volume and use.

EDITOR'S NOTE: *Saturday Review* asked Dr. Vannevar Bush, Honorary Chairman of the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, whether, in his opinion, an accident could lead to nuclear war. Here is his answer:

THERE certainly is no doubt that Mr. Burdick's thesis is correct. The system of holding in readiness bombing planes and missiles is subject to human error, or mechanical failure, and indeed there is danger that an atomic war might be started by accident or miscalculation. I believe the danger of war from this source is serious. I do not think that it is critical, and I certainly do not think war from this source is inevitable. It merits very close attention, and I think it is getting it.

The other dangers we all know. I believe that the danger of a war of desperation is not great at the present time. It might become great if the number of nations holding missiles armed with atomic war heads increases. The danger of war from this source is, of course, closely tied with the great problem of the explosion of population. I believe that the danger of a war of aggression, that is, a war started by a dictator or a ruling clique for military glory, or for plunder, has almost disappeared. This is important because of the fact that a very large proportion of wars in the past have been started in just this manner. The danger has almost disappeared, since a dictator planning such a war today could be almost sure of one result, namely, that he would not survive it. The final danger, of course, is that a small war with conventional weapons might expand into a world war with atomic weapons. The clear example here was of course in Korea. Fortunately the folly of introducing atomic weapons into that war was completely avoided, and this precedent is very important, indeed.

Personally, I do not think we are going to have a great war for some time to come, but we would be blind not to see the dangers.

V. Bush

Personal History

Continued from page 27

than Commander Robert E. Peary, its true discoverer). He had on his staff at one time or another Walt Whitman, Mark Twain, Richard Harding Davis, and Stephen Crane. He once fired a dozen of his best staffers simply because his editors insisted they were indispensable.

The younger Bennett was capable of insulting anyone, including royalty. Kaiser Wilhelm of Germany was on one occasion not thoroughly briefed on the social and journalistic importance of Commodore Bennett of New York, and when the Kaiser's regatta aides had been advised that Bennett would not object to being invited aboard the imperial yacht and the invitation did not come, Bennett sailed off in a rage. The Commodore's action was an unmistakable affront. Greatly aggrieved, the Kaiser wished to know why this important American had taken such an impolite and abrupt departure from the imperial regatta. No one had ever insulted the Kaiser before; His Majesty did everything he could think of to make amends; but the American Commodore did not even answer the personal messages of apology sent from the head of the Imperial German Government, an unthinkable insult. For the next pre-war decade, the Kaiser brought up the Bennett matter with every American, official or private, to whom he was introduced, and the chances are that James Gordon Bennett, Jr., was the only human being ever to insult Wilhelm II socially and get away with it.

Richard O'Connor has in other years recreated some pretty colorful characters, Bat Masterson, Wild Bill Hickok, and Jay Gould among them. He must have felt immediately at home with the Bennett files, for if any publisher, including Hearst, has been wilder than the eccentric and sometimes competent dictator of the *Herald*, he is lost to posterity. Mr. O'Connor's long training as a Hearst reporter stands him in good stead here; he knows color when he smells it, and isn't ashamed to splash staccato sentences as from a gatling gun.

The result is highly readable, if oversimplified and perhaps imaginative biography. Bennett's utter lack of inhibition in all fields gives his life a sort of Errol Flynn flavor that somehow taints the editor's undeniable brilliance. An old-timer in the business can only sigh with relief that he never had to work for one so arbitrary, spoiled, and totally unstable. It must have been plain hell.



Frederic Remington's "From the Night Herd."

—Culver.

THE WEST

THE WEST

THE AMERICAN WEST

THROUGH the mountain passes that lead through the Rockies, and along the air corridors above them, they ride, the new migrants. On the far side of that rock wall the West begins, the West of the High Sierras and the deep Canyon, the mesa, the mesquite and Hood and Rainier. The fog and the films, the missions and the wine, the fruit plains, the date trees, evergreens to the north, ever-young to the south. Cable car and Pebble Beach, Muscle Beach and make-believe, oil out of sand, dreams out of celluloid, health out of a bottle, life out-of-doors. Westward moves the new migrant overwhelming the last frontier, sending the population figures into *grands jetés*, changing the nation.

We are in the midst of the Great Westward Tilt, the title of a study commenced on the next page by Neil Morgan, columnist of The San Diego *Evening Tribune*, which is excerpted from his book "Westward Tilt" to be published by Random next spring. Eric Sevareid, the sober-sided CBS commentator and newspaper columnist, writes, wistfully perhaps, of Colorado and of his Dakota boyhood. Gene Sherman, Pulitzer-prize-winning columnist of the Los Angeles *Times*, explains the eating habits of his native land, a chilling report. Joseph Wechsberg, SR's agent in *Mitteleuropa*, proves one can have a Western-tilted boyhood even though what was home on the range was goulash. The stirrings in the Pacific paint pot are explained by Mitchell Wilder of the Amon Carter Museum of Western Art in Fort Worth. The rubber-necking red-skin on the cover is the product of Isadore Seltzer who won awards from the art directors of Los Angeles, a city in which he worked and studied. Robert Lewis Shayon, the house television appraiser, examines the cultural trend of The Oaters. Paine Knickerbocker, who wonders over the state of theatre in the West, is correspondent in those matters for the San Francisco *Chronicle*. That leaves the redoubtable Lucius Beebe, author, eater, curator, historian, who examines sin in the One Sound State. The state, to be sure, is Nevada, where next week 1,500 delegates to the World Travel Congress of the American Travel Agents will begin arriving from their stations all over the globe for a first-hand look at the vanishing American frontier. Veni, vidi, Vegas is doubtless the cry of the travel men. And all points west. —HORACE SUTTON.