

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Moon Mission

THE THOUGHTS of Joseph Wood Krutch are invariably expressed with lucidity, but it seems to me he shows a blind spot in his article "Why I Am Not Going to the Moon" [SR, Nov. 20]. He says that the chief argument supporting a landing on the moon seems to be simply "because it is there." It does not seem reasonable that any but a very small percentage of those who believe in, advocate, and are working on the space program consider this to be *the* reason. Beyond the moon are the planets; beyond the planets are the stars. Beyond all of them is the secret of the universe. What is the key to creation and the meaning of life? What is the Grand Design? Surely these are the ultimate questions man hopes to have answered in the far reaches of space. Whether he will find the answers he seeks no one can know. But can Mr. Krutch claim that the search is a useless errand?

JANET B. FISHER.

Kerhonkson, N.Y.

JOSEPH WOOD KRUTCH leaves me somewhat puzzled. Frankly, I wasn't aware that he had either been offered a ride to the moon or had changed his mind about going, whichever the case may be. But in either case this article should help NASA choose a better candidate. I am not going to the moon either, but I am not making a national issue of it.

Anyhow, I am sure similar articles were written to discourage other explorers throughout history. Consider Columbus, Ericson, Magellan. Did these men wait until all domestic problems were solved before they went? If they had, they would still be waiting. . . .

ERNEST H. WELLS.

Huntsville, Ala.

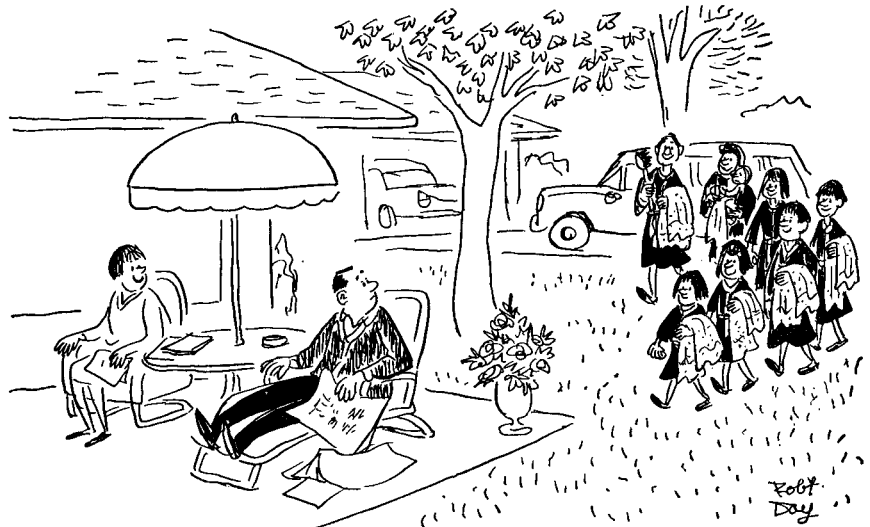
I SUGGEST THAT the principal reason Mr. Krutch is not going to the moon is that no one is likely to invite him. . . .

BARRY RICHMAN.

New York, N.Y.

MR. KRUTCH makes the mistake of looking upon the lunar flight as a single phenomenon rather than an integral part of a much larger picture.

There are many reasons for going to the moon, some of them rather practical. For example: We have already learned that many tasks—such as global weather observation and communications, geophysical and astronomical research—can be accomplished better from space than from the ground. But maintaining satellites in orbit can be very costly, because the costs of boosting equipment from the earth's surface are astronomical. Now, if this equipment and the propellants needed to boost it could be manufactured on the moon, it could be flown to earth orbit for a fraction of the cost of boosting the same tonnages from the earth's surface. This is simply a function of the moon's lower gravity and airlessness. No one knows whether there will be sufficient natural resources accessible



"Oh, I forgot to tell you. The Mitchells' well has petered out. I invited them over for showers."

on the moon to allow manufacturing operations. If there are, the costs of those things we wish to do in space will decrease dramatically. And we will never know if this can be accomplished unless we go to the moon.

The moon mission is not detracting from the further growth of technology; if anything, it is adding to that growth by stimulating men from all walks of life to attack problems long thought unassailable. As Mr. Krutch himself points out, if we can go to the moon, why can't we handle population problems? We can and will, and technology will play an important role in feeding, curing, and educating the peoples of the world.

BENJAMIN W. BOVA.

Arlington, Mass.

Extremism Revisited

ARTHUR M. SCHLESINGER's attempt to smear Barry Goldwater in his article "Extremism in American Politics" in your issue of November 7 is of such a low standard that it has no place in a magazine like SR. He says that "extremism" dictated the nominees and platform of the GOP in 1964. Extremism, like society, is a concept and it can do neither good nor bad. Mr. Schlesinger points out that the "moderates" failed to unite to oppose Goldwater. He does not mention that no one dared to oppose LBJ in the other large party.

The trite attack on Goldwater's defense of extremism is the mark of a dishonest man. If we had not used extremism during World War II we might right now be living under the Fascism that Mr. Schlesinger doesn't like.

If Mr. Schlesinger will promise to give up his obvious prejudice I, as a Goldwater supporter, will give up any plan to "manhandle fellow Americans."

EUGENE MOHAN.

Minneapolis, Minn.

THE ARTICLE by Mr. Schlesinger, blithely assigning all of us Goldwater supporters to

the same category as the Ku Klux Klan and the American Protective Association, is nothing less than an insult to a great many of your readers, including myself.

PERRY A. BRICK.

Danbury, Conn.

WE ARE very much touched by the beautiful tribute of Mr. Schlesinger to his father. Like his beloved father, Arthur Schlesinger is a man of whom the community of man can be very proud.

STUART AND RUTH PALMER.

Sag Harbor, N.Y.

Numbers Games

NOT TOO LONG AGO you ran a little essay about the comedy of errors caused by automation [PHOENIX NEST, Aug. 14]. Most of us have had our sad little rounds with that type of thing, and those so afflicted hope magazines will continue printing the stories.

One of my own tussles had to do with a record company. I sent in a check for \$9.99 to close out an account. Unfortunately, their steel bookkeeper recorded it as \$6.66. I received letters from aggressive collection agencies to cough up the \$3.33 or they'd burn me at the stake. Fighting the good fight, I refused to go down without a whimper. I kept at it and they finally traced the dire deed back to its source and admitted that one of their robots had slipped a disc. This took approximately six months.

After a few minor skirmishes I am now engaged in another hassle. On this one the banks disagreed. My bank said they sent my check back to the company because the company had endorsed the check wrong and they had returned it to the company for my protection. Well, their benevolent act has me in a lot of hot water, I can tell you.

Articles like yours show those of us in the ranks that we are not fighting alone but that many are sharing the bruises of battle.

D. H. MILLER.

Eveleth, Minn.



The Webern-Mahler Axis—Singers

ANTON WEBERN and Gustav Mahler have long been recognized as the polar personalities of Vienna's last musical cycle, but it remained for Leonard Bernstein to make a public demonstration of the reasons in the latest of his series of New York Philharmonic Orchestra programs devoted to "Symphonic Forms in the Twentieth Century." Everything was fine and to the point about his pairing of Mahler's hellish lengths (Symphony No. 7) and Webern's heavenly brevity (Symphony 1928) save the order in which they were performed; putting Webern first and Mahler second confounded logic by citing effect first, cause second.

To be sure, it would have confounded the logic of a public program in a subscription series to have played them in the order of writing, for how many listeners would have remained for the eight minutes of Webern after the hour and twenty of Mahler? The obvious answer suggests, too, that this kind of speculative combination isn't really compatible with the logic and organization of a symphony series on the Philharmonic's plan—which remains the immovable object when confronted with a less than irresistible force.

For those who could sort out their impressions in retrospect rather than as they were happening, however, the relationship was clear enough. To me it proved that calling a succession of musical expressions a "symphony" doesn't make it so, in one case or the other. What Mahler was getting at, in his succession of gargantuan movements, was on the order of a divertimento; Webern might have called his writings "Orchestral Pieces," if he had not used the term earlier.

Mahler's Seventh is one of the least played of his symphonies, not because it is more difficult than four or five of the others, or even because it is much longer than his average. But it is, with the possible exception of the Sixth, the Mahler symphony with the greatest disproportion of length to substance, the most undisciplined in its repetitions, elaborations, digressions, and tonal footnotes, as self-indulgent in its preoccupation with an inner urge as a writer who leaves punctuation to the reader.

Just as the best of Mahler is the music he wrote to words (which imposed a factor of organization that he rarely achieved without them), so the second-best is the music in which banalities must be tolerated for the prevailing ex-

altation. In the Seventh, it is the other way around—there is, every now and then, an occasional exaltation amid the prevailing banality. The kind of thing to which the Mahler apologists allude, in the way of arresting tonal combinations (birdlike flute voices, atmospheric cow bells, tinklings of guitar and mandolin), reward curiosity but do not award pleasure. At the Friday-afternoon performance, those who took the option of leaving after the second or third movement seemed to be regarded by Bernstein as hostile to his interests—they had no other way of registering their dissent.

In a way, however, they were only asserting their fidelity to the same natural law that produced Webern after Mahler—namely, that to every action there is an equal and opposite reaction. The conclusion that length had had its day and brevity was the only possible alternative might have occurred to any other clever musician reared in the aftermath of Mahler. What made Webern's selectivity something more than merely clever was his invention of what might be called the art of omission. A note here, a tone color there, all in the framework of silence, combine to produce an esthetic of their own—which is, after all, as much as one can ask of any artistic expression. Bernstein's decision to repeat the Webern on each program, because it was so "short," obscured rather than clarified his point (to my way of thinking). The issue was not length but completeness—something Webern attained in eight minutes but Mahler did not in eighty. This Q.E.D. was made possible only by the devotion of Bernstein and his players to the interests of each.

The career that has carried Judith Raskin from television to the New York City Opera to the Metropolitan reached a new plateau of excellence in her first venture with a Town Hall recital. This was no miscellaneous series of songs in search of a character, but a full-fledged lieder recital drawn from the works of Beethoven, Schubert, Mendelssohn, Wolf, and Mahler. To say that Miss Raskin performed her chosen task with intelligence, musicianship, taste, and discrimination would be, merely, to recapitulate the qualities that have distinguished her efforts wherever encountered.

She did, indeed, do something more. That was to take a long step toward the front rank of recitalists now active. Her identity with what she sang was strong-

est in matter of a lighter, more playful character (Schubert's "Jüngling An Der Quelle," Mendelssohn's "Suleika," Wolf's "In der Schatten meiner Locken" as instances), but she skirted monotony by providing the contrast of Beethoven's "Neue Liebe" and Schubert's "Gretchen am Spinnrad" at strategic points. But the big climaxing phrase of Wolf's "Verschwiegene Liebe" asks a larger sound than is comfortably accessible to her.

Unlike some others who venture this kind of activity, Miss Raskin is on intimate terms with the poetic content of her material, and she frequently put a loving touch to a favored phrase, as in the last occurrence of "Mein Herz ist Schwer" in "Gretchen am Spinnrad." What needs more of her attention is the strident sound that sometimes showed itself in the top range of her voice. George Schick's accompaniments often attained the stature of duets, so well were they played.

Almost everything was in tune with the fictitious West depicted by Puccini when *La Fanciulla* had its first performance of the season at the Metropolitan. "Tune" is used here not in the narrow technical sense of vibrations per second, but in the broader, philosophic sense of temperamental affinity. Dorothy Kirsten performed her carefully marcelled Minnie with an emotional intensity as deep as the lacquer on her gleaming fingernails, and she had the ideal opposite in the Dick Johnson of Franco Corelli, easily the tallest good-bad man this role has known.

The only false note was intruded by Anselmo Colzani, who had the unconventional idea that Sheriff Jack Rance was a real person, and worked devotedly to achieve that end. This is the kind of effort that can give a performer a bad name among his operatic colleagues. As it happens, Rance's reward for being "real" is to lose both the bandit he is seeking and the girl he loves, which shows how much, in opera, virtue is its own reward.

For Miss Kirsten, this Minnie marked the twentieth anniversary of her debut at the Metropolitan in 1945, a fact that could not be deduced either from her appearance or her sound. She is, of course, a much more assured performer now than she was in that introductory *Bohème*, but still much the same kind of singer. Now, as then, she leaves considerable question why, with the voice and technical skill she commands, she fails to convey more emotional conviction. It is related, no doubt, to the same preoccupation with effect rather than meaning that resulted in the well-coiffed Minnie of the mining camp. It tends to persist.

As for Corelli, his Johnson in *Fanciulla* was much the same as his Rodolfo
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