

# LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

## Outmoded Term

I SHOULD LIKE to congratulate you on the excellent account of Dr. and Mrs. Paul Brand's work [SR, Oct. 3]. I must, however, enter a protest against the constant use of the word "leper," for by employing this term you have perpetuated in the minds of your readers a concept of leprosy from the Middle Ages.

You may believe that no one would be offended by the use of such a word, but I beg of you to realize that had this article been written in relation to mental illness and not leprosy, and the word "lunatic" had been used in the same way as you have used the word "leper," such an article would be rejected out of hand by editors of magazines. Therefore I trust you will appreciate that a similar sense of abhorrence is created in the minds of those working and specializing in the science of leprosy.

Since rehabilitation and re-entry into normal life is an important part of the therapy of mental illness, every leprosy patient should be encouraged to look upon himself as a useful member of society. If he needs hospitalization, he should expect, on his return, to be accepted into society, just as the healed tuberculosis patient is welcomed back after his period of institutional treatment is completed.

The leprosy patient deserves the homage of all people of good will because it is his willingness to place himself in the hands of research workers that has done more than anything else to advance our knowledge of leprosy, and thus bring the day nearer when leprosy will be as efficiently treated and controlled as tuberculosis is today. . . .

ROBERT G. COCHRANE, M.D.  
Carville, La.

EDITOR'S NOTE: Dr. Cochrane is right. The term "leprosy patient" is far more dignified than "leper." We are glad to be set straight by so eminent an expert in the field of leprosy research and treatment as Dr. Cochrane. While we are on the subject, we should like to call the attention of our readers to an excellent book on the subject of leprosy—"Alone No Longer," by Stanley Stein and Lawrence Blochman.

## Lost Words

AT THE CLOSE of the nostalgic memoir on the lost resort of Shanghai [SR, Jan. 2], Peggy Durdin quotes the lines:

That was in another country.  
And besides, the wench is dead.

She ascribes them to John Webster's *Duchess of Malfi*, but they actually appear in the early part of Act IV of Christopher Marlowe's *Jew of Malta*.

Poor Marlowe! During the past year, which was his 400th anniversary, too, he has been shamefully neglected, while his contemporary and rival has received all kinds of birthday gifts in the form of special lectures, TV programs, and extra performances, not to mention a rash of books. At least let us give due credit here to

SR/January 30, 1965



"Don't you have anything that just smells nice?"

Marlowe. Certainly the poor fellow deserves the publicity.

MRS. WILSON H. PILE.

Milton, Mass.

## A Way with Wit

MAY I OFFER the highest praise and admiration for the writer of TOP OF MY HEAD—Goodman Ace.

Wit flows out of him so naturally. He has unusual talent for satire and the double-edged remark. Every week when we receive our SR, my husband and I turn immediately to Mr. Ace's column. Long live Goodman Ace and all like him, who can make us understand an important point merely by making us laugh at ourselves.

MARCIE BUCKLEY.

San Diego, Calif.

## Battle of the Bagels

I HAVE BEEN RETAINED by my client, George F. Bagel, to seek redress from *Saturday Review* in connection with your article and subsequent letters on the origin of the bagel. Contrary to Mr. Sutton, Professor Pepper, Professor Connors, Professor Trubnick, and Mr. Sitewell, the bagel was not invented or discovered by:

- Bagelus of ancient Greece;
- Bhagelramesis of ancient Egypt;
- Abigail in Biblical lore;
- Brasidas of ancient Mitylene.

The bagel was invented by Zhelleck P. Bagel in 1893 in New York. It was put on sale for the first time in the Rivington Street Bakery on or about February 10, 1893. A copyright on the word "bagel" was granted to Z. P. Bagel in March 1894.

My client, George F. Bagel, great-grandson of Z. P. Bagel, has asked me to obtain from you suitable retractions and acknowledgments. Because of his respect for *Saturday Review*, he would prefer not to sue you for damages, but he feels he is entitled to a public apology and retraction.

JAMES N. DAWSON,

Dawson and Davidson, Attorneys.

New York, N.Y.

EDITOR'S NOTE: All respect and honor to Mr. G. F. Bagel, but the editors will stand their ground. So far as we know, a lawsuit on the origin of the bagel has never occurred before. It is something of a privilege to be involved in a new experience in human history. We can hardly wait.

## Coming of Age in L.A.

YOUR STORY and cover dealing with the Los Angeles Music Center [SR, Dec. 26] were a great thrill to all of us connected with the project. To be featured on your cover means that Los Angeles has really come of age culturally.

RALPH JACKSON.

Los Angeles, Calif.



## Beethoven by Schippers and Serkin—Nilsson

**E**VEN ONE who knows his Beethoven by the numbers (the opus numbers, that is) would have a hard time drawing a mental focus on a work titled *Cantata on the Death of Emperor Joseph II*. The reason for this is simple. It was not only written when the titan-to-be was a tyro of twenty; it was not performed then, or in his lifetime. Indeed, it has no official opus number and has probably not been heard in New York since 1920, when it was given by the Beethoven Association. Thus it was a public benefaction for Thomas Schippers to make a place for it in his current engagement with the New York Philharmonic Orchestra.

What was apparent from the outset (aside from the conductor's omission of some sizable sections, and his odd choice of a Latin translation for a work whose original begins "Todt! Todt! Stöhnt es") was that Beethoven's affinity for C minor predates even the Trio of Opus 1, which has hitherto been reckoned its earliest durable expression. Instinctively, almost by what might be termed an atavistic influence, he gravitated, in this work of lamentation and deep emotion, to the C minor-E flat context in which so many of his later works of profound feeling were to be expressed.

No less expressive of the trackless "before" from which his works emerged was the substance of the writing itself. As Edward Downes noted in his program commentary, it embodies a meaningful phrase that has always seemed a stroke of mature genius when encountered in its familiar place in *Fidelio*, a decade and a half later. Here it is, however, at the beginning of the cantata and again at its peroration "Joseph is dead, Joseph the father of deathless endeavor is dead," the same stygian gloom of Florestan's dungeon, with the same beam of light in a rising melodic phrase. These are the intimations of immortality that emerge in the least expected places when the child is, truly, father to the man.

As well as earning thanks for performing the work at all, Schippers earned marks in excellence for the quality of the performance. The orchestral and the choral purposes of the composer were admirably balanced, and the solo episodes for soprano (Martina Arroyo) and bass (Justino Díaz) were skilfully interwoven into the whole. Schippers's faith in his soloists was not misplaced, for Miss Arroyo now has every bit of the assurance to make the most of her broad but focused soprano sound, and Díaz is rap-

idly growing up to the potentialities of his dark, appealing tone quality.

Schippers provided both unity and contrast for the little-known Beethoven work by balancing it with Rossini's *Stabat Mater*. This deserves its reputation as an example of Rossini's ability to write in any style—comic, tragic, sacred, or secular—to which he was impelled. But it is a reputation that has rarely earned a performance by an orchestra of the Philharmonic's quality or so able a chorus as the Camerata Singers trained by Abraham Kaplan. Some of the conductor's contrasts of loud and soft might be termed "theatrical," and his tempo for "Cujus animam" was jaunty rather than heroic, but it was well within an arguable latitude. Schippers's choice for this time-tested aria was Tito Del Bianco, an Italian tenor previously unheard in this country. I liked the freshness and flexibility of his sound, its highly agreeable timbre and the solidly outspoken D flat he made the climax of his solo. Sometimes Del Bianco threatened to become sobby as well as throbby, but the danger point was not breached. The solo quartet was completed by Beverly Wolff, who matched her colleagues both in youth and accomplishment.

Earlier in the week Rudolf Serkin illuminated another aspect of youthful Beethoven as soloist with the Philadelphia Orchestra in a Carnegie Hall series devoted to a tour of the composer's orchestral works. The B-flat concerto is not quite such a rarity as the *Joseph* cantata, but it comes rarely from the hands of such an artist as Serkin. He made the thoughtful choice of putting it before the C major on the same program, recognizing, thus, that it was actually the first piano concerto of Beethoven, though circumstances of the time decreed No. 1 for the C major, No. 2 for the B flat.

What was most to the point was that Serkin succeeded perfectly in devising a character for a composer who did not, as of 1795, have the same capacity to realize himself in a wordless work as he did in the cantata of five years before. Instrumentally, he was still subservient to such contemporaries as Clementi and Cramer, whom Serkin respected in his clean attack, restrained sonority, and articulated passage playing. There was, appropriately, more brio in the finale, which came along a few

years later and was responsible for the delay in publication and the work's subsequent misnumbering. Unfortunately for the best-laid plans, Serkin's stylistic exposition was hampered, in the ensuing C major, by a broken piano string. But the spirit was there, as it was in Ormandy's orchestral effort.

Puccini's *Turandot* made a welcome return to the Metropolitan's repertoire in mid-January, not only for the visual distinctions of Cecil Beaton's colorful decor, but because it brought a promise of Wagner and Strauss to come. That is to say, the return of Birgit Nilsson, whose vocal quality was prime, her command of Puccini's relentlessly demanding writing as effortless and compelling as ever. Rather than being the homogeneous part of a satisfying whole she was when the production was first directed by Leopold Stokowski in 1960, Miss Nilsson—through no fault of her own—was the radiant light of an otherwise clouded panorama. Jess Thomas's first Calaf was creditable to the American tenor's artistic purposes, but without the ringing vibrance or the stylistic sense to suit the circumstance. He looked well, walked well, tried hard; this is not a Puccini voice. Fausto Cleva's conducting was possibly more of a comfort for the singers than Stokowski's had been, but the electric charge his predecessor generated was conspicuously absent.

The season's last performance of Menotti's *The Last Savage* provided an opportunity for Joy Clements as Sardula (in place of Teresa Stratas) to demonstrate her talents more prominently and at greater length than in most prior roles. Her attractive presence and light but clearly audible sound were woven into a characterization that was more than a mere likeness of Miss Stratas. Miss Clements had an ingratiating quality of her own, both in singing the notes and speaking the text of the part. Robert La Marchina's musical direction gave the work a little broader base than it had before.

Renata Tebaldi's resumption of regular weekly or semi-weekly performances has had the consequences that opera enthusiasts must wish for this fine artist: a steady accretion of confidence in her newly found vocal strength, a gradual return to the refinements of phrasing and tonal gradations long associated with her. The most Tebaldi-ish performance she has given in months was her recent *Tosca* with Richard Tucker as Cavaradossi. There was very little of the recent lunging for top tones, and a much more even, well-adjusted production throughout. Tucker is now singing Cavaradossi better than at any time before, with the kind of youthful ardor that comes only with age. Anselmo Colzani was the Scarpia, Nello Santi the conductor.

—IRVING KOLODIN.