

SR's Check List of the Week's New Books

Crime, Suspense

THE KESSLER LEGACY. By Richard Martin Stern. Scribners. \$4.95.

THE LONG PURSUIT. By Jon Cleary. Morrow. \$4.50.

Current Affairs

ABUSE OF POWER. By Theodore Draper. Viking. Hardbound, \$4.95. Paperback, \$1.95.

FIRE AND MOVEMENT: Bargain-Base-ment Warfare in the Far East. By Jac Weller. Crowell. \$6.95.

THE WATER CRISIS. By Senator Frank E. Moss. Praeger. \$5.95.

Fiction

A CITY FOR ST. FRANCIS. By Evelyn Wells. Doubleday. \$5.95.

GRINGOS AND OTHER STORIES. By Michael Rumaker. Grove. \$3.95.

I WANT A BLACK DOLL. By Frank Hercules. Simon & Schuster. \$5.95.

A NIGHT OF WATCHING. By Elliott Arnold. Scribners. \$5.95.

PILGRIMAGE. By Dorothy Richardson. Knopf. Four vols., \$30. (Reissue.)

THE SCAPEGOAT. By August Strindberg. Eriksson. \$4.50.

THE SPARROW'S FALL. By Fred Bodworth. Doubleday. \$4.95.

THE \$300 MAN. By John Sanford. Prentice-Hall. \$4.95.

History

THE ALEXIAD OF THE PRINCESS ANNA COMNENA. Translated by Elizabeth A. S. Dawes. Barnes & Noble. \$8.50.

THE AMERICAN MIND IN THE MID-NINETEENTH CENTURY. By Irving H. Bartlett. Crowell. \$4.95.

ENLIGHTENED DESPOTISM. By John G. Gagliardo. Crowell. \$3.95.

THE INCOMPARABLE CRIME: Mass Extinction in the Twentieth Century; The Legacy of Guilt. By Roger Manvell and Heinrich Fraenkel. Putnam. \$5.95.

YEARS OF PROTEST: A Collection of American Writings of the 1930s. Edited by Jack Salzman and Barry Wallenstein. Pegasus. \$7.50.

Literary History, Criticism

THE ART OF SINCLAIR LEWIS. By D. J. Dooley. Univ. of Nebraska Press. \$5.50.

LITERARY ANECDOTES OF THE EIGHTEENTH CENTURY. By John Nichols. Edited by Colin Clair. Southern Illinois Univ. Press. \$19.50.

SAMUEL BECKETT'S ART. By John Fletcher. Barnes & Noble. \$4.50.

Miscellany

THREE ESSAYS ON THUCYDIDES. By John Finley. Harvard. \$3.95.

A PICTORIAL HISTORY OF THE WORLD'S GREAT TRIALS: From Socrates to Eichmann. By Brandt Aymar and Edward Sagarin. Crown. \$10.

Personal History

BLASTING AND BOMBARDIERING. By

Wyndham Lewis. Univ of California Press. \$7.50. (Second revised edition.)

DAN BANA: The Memoirs of a Nigerian Official. By Stanhope White. Heineman. \$5.50.

THE EMPEROR'S LAST SOLDIERS. By Ito Masashi. Coward-McCann. \$4.95.

MEXICAN REBEL: Pascual Orozco and the Mexican Revolution 1910-1915. By Michael C. Meyer. Univ of Nebraska Press. \$5.50.

VAN DORN: The Life and Times of a Confederate General. By Robert G. Hartje. Vanderbilt. \$8.95.

Philosophy, Religion

THE ART OF THE SOLUBLE. By P. B. Medawar, F.R.S. Barnes & Noble. \$4.50.

BITTERSWEET GRACE: A Treasury of Religious Satire. Edited by Walter D. Wagoner. World. \$4.95.

THE PHENOMENOLOGY OF THE SOCIAL

WORLD. By Alfred Schutz. Northwestern Univ. Press. \$10.

THE PHENOMENOLOGY OF WILLING AND MOTIVATION: And Other Phenomenologica. By Alexander Pfänder. Northwestern Univ. Press. \$7.50.

REINCARNATION IN WORLD THOUGHT. Edited by Joseph Head and S. L. Cranston. Julian Press. \$8.50.

Poetry, Plays

THE SOLITARIES. By Ted Walker. Braziller. \$3.95.

VIET ROCK AND OTHER PLAYS. By Megan Terry. Simon & Schuster. Hardbound, \$5.95. Paperback, \$2.45.

Psychology, Sociology

DELINQUENCY CAN BE STOPPED. By Judge Lester H. Loble and Max Wylie. McGraw-Hill. \$4.95.

INSTINCT AND INTELLIGENCE: Behavior of Animals and Man. By S. A. Barnett. Prentice-Hall. \$6.95.

—Compiled by NAID SOFIAN.

Buy By Mail

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for a higher price. If you can commit the buyer to several titles in advance, your promotional costs are amortized over a much broader base. Both American Heritage Publishing Co. and Time-Life Books have been notably adept at this, and, with minor exceptions, they rely entirely on the mails to sell their product.

Indeed, Time-Life, which calls itself "an enterprise which only faintly resembles that of the conventional publisher," has sold sixty million books by mail in six years. The company is now printing about thirteen million books a year for domestic consumption, plus another four million in thirteen foreign languages. Subscribers "sign up" for a look at each new title in a series (of which there are eight at the moment) with the privilege of returning those they don't want. Because of high volume—the minimum print order on most titles is 100,000 copies—prices are comparatively low: \$3.95 in most cases. Time-Life adds about one and a half million new customers each year, and to keep them supplied must get a new title on the press every nine working days. The operation illustrates lesson number two. These are items which people don't ordinarily take the initiative in buying. They're sold, not bought.

Eugene M. Schwartz, president of Information, Inc. (sometimes known as Executive Research Institute) has taken this principle and, through a series of flanking movements along Publishers Row, converted it into the ninth and final dictum in selling by mail: do for others what they cannot do for them-

selves. By ransacking the backlists of some forty-two different trade publishers, Schwartz resurrects older titles, redesigns the covers and jackets, prints new editions, and gives them a hard-sell mail-order treatment that has grown into a \$4 million-a-year business. "I step in when all else has failed," Schwartz says. Royalties are paid to the various publishers, while Information, Inc., assumes all promotional costs.

This is currently the gimmickiest gimmick in publishing, and it works because many publishers either aren't set up for mail promotion or don't want to antagonize the bookstores. An agency man who writes his own ad copy, Schwartz goes counter to the trend by selling one book at a time, offering no free examination privileges, and collecting his money (usually \$5.98 per book) in advance.

As a clearing house for has-beens, the operation specializes in self-improvement titles, and almost always turns in a better performance than the original firm. *How to Get Thinner Once and For All*, a 1966 Dutton book, sold about ten times as many copies through the mails as it did in the stores. *Yoga for Women*, from Harper & Row, is now getting a similar second life. Schwartz went back thirty-one years for one title (*The Art of Selfishness*), but in any case he will accept a book only after it has been pretested for pay dirt. A favorable response will result in mailings that run well into the millions. The Executive Research Institute does very little research, and Information, Inc., conveys information of doubtful value; but Schwartz is here to say.

"I call it one way to skin the publishers," Plabb concluded.

—DAVID DEMPSEY.



Schuller's Study in Black and White

GÜNTHER SCHULLER's *The Visitation* has come and gone from the Metropolitan Opera House as has the Hamburg State Opera which performed it, leaving a single question: What did the audience at its premiere in Germany last October see, or hear, in it to stimulate the enthusiasm it aroused? Allowing for all the variables—the impact, in Germany, of a work about Negro persecution performed in large part by Negroes; the presence, in the pit, of a jazz combo along with a conventional orchestra; even the possibility that the production originally moved better than it did in its adaptation for the presently turntable-less Metropolitan stage—it is still a puzzle to determine where its prior audience found enough musical and dramatic interest to sustain attention over a three-hour course.

A clever man, an excellent musician, a humanist at heart, Schuller describes his dramatic thesis as “after a motive by Franz Kafka.” That is to say, he has borrowed from Kafka's *Der Prozess* (“The Trial”) the central idea of a man subject to the persecution of persons unknown, by whom he is convicted at a nameless court for an unidentified crime. Adapting this central situation to the present day (though no place or time is stipulated) has enabled Schuller to convert it into a study in black and white, in which racism becomes the motivating factor. Along the way Schuller suggests that his central character, Carter Jones, may have been a victim of mistaken identity, but that it really doesn't matter to the bullies and sadists who hound him to his death, that any black body will do as well as any other black body.

Here is a subject as timely as tomorrow's headlines, and one which a serious artist with a serious purpose could pursue with heart and soul to its bitter, degrading outcome. What is primarily lacking in *The Visitation*, as performed under the composer's own direction, is the heart and soul to make it either moving or meaningful. Kafka's basic structure is puffed out with too many references to “the power structure,” “constitutional guarantees,” “I have my rights, too,” “we cannot and will not wait any longer” to serve dramatic ends.

In short, by undertaking to create his own libretto, Schuller has not only deprived himself of a suitably skilled collaborator, but also burdened himself with his own lack of theatrical competence. Both Marc Blitzstein and Gian

Carlo Menotti (whose line of descent *The Visitation* shares) served themselves better in the joint role of librettist-composer than Schuller did. As an instance, he plants the idea in the first scene that Carter Jones, a student working his way through college, is serious and sensitive (the toughs who invade his room deride him for reading *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man*). But Schuller seems to forget this suggestion of sensitivity thereafter as Jones, abused, confused, and hounded, flits through a series of sexual encounters with 1) a floozie, 2) a sluttish charwoman (whom he is for reasons unknown thereafter accused of raping), and 3) the enticing nurse of an invalid he has gone to see in hope of finding a way out of his dilemma. Perhaps they are meant to suggest his worldly innocence, but they scarcely contribute to a respect for him as a human being.

One could cite other complications

Drawing by Ronnie C., Grade One

By Ruth Lechlitner

FOR the sky, blue. But the six-year-old searching his crayon-box, finds no blue to match that sky framed by the window—a see-through shine over treetops, housetops. The wax colors hold only dead light, not this water-flash thinning to silver at morning's far edge. Gray won't do, either: gray is for rain that you make with dark slanting lines down-paper.

Try orange!

—Draw a large corner circle for sun, egg-yolk solid, with yellow strokes leaping outward like fire bloom—a brightness shouting flower-shape wind-shape joy-shape!

The boy sighs, with leg-twisting bliss creating . . .

It is done. The stubby crayons (all ten of them) are stuffed back bumpily into their box.

and confusions, not to mention the lack of a verbal thrust or eloquence appropriate to the subject, without reaching the essential point. More than a few strong works of the musical theater—“opera” as such is irrelevant in this context—have achieved their objective despite an infirm or insufficient libretto. The simple summation is that Schuller hasn't created enough consequential musical matter to involve the listener with the plight of his character.

THE most vital and arousing sounds in the score are those which erupt from time to time from the jazz combo (which includes, among its pit performers, the excellent German trombonist Albert Mangelsdorff). There is nothing in the least mysterious about this, for Schuller has been knee-deep in jazz since student days, and he commands its vocabulary with ease and assurance. He is equally well versed in the contemporary “classical” idioms, but he doesn't utilize them to nearly so productive a result in *The Visitation*. Much of the text is declaimed, according to the *sprechstimme* manner, on wide-ranging pitches over long-held chords in the orchestra. This is, initially, not particularly suitable to the subject matter and confuses rather than clarifies delivery of the text. Much else reflects Schuller's familiar skill in orchestration, but too many effects that are well sounding of themselves lack pattern, connection, or sequential context.

Reduced to essentials, Schuller's effort on behalf of the subject he has chosen to treat in *The Visitation* is too often characterized by stereotypes rather than people, and dramatic clichés rather than theatrical invention. His central character looks for assistance in every imaginable quarter—not merely the law and political influence, but among those of his own race who have risen in the world to positions of responsibility in education and religion—without finding it. One comes, eventually, to the conclusion that not only Schuller's theme but his treatment of it is black and white. That is customary and expectable in a polemic, but dramatic validity calls for more variety and contrast, a balancing of forces, a subtler shading of human impulse on both sides of the dividing line of passions.

As a production, neither the designs of Ita Maximovna nor the staging of Günther Rennert matched the high standard the Hamburg company has reached in several of its other productions (including *Jenufa* as well as *Lulu*). McHenry Boatwright is a fine vocalist but hardly the actor to make Carter Jones's plight convincing. The work is dotted with what would, in movie terminology, be called “cameo” roles, among them Jeanette Scovotti as the floozie, Tatiana Troyanos as the Land-

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