

# Letters to the Editor

## Getting in Touch

CHARLES FRANKEL'S "Out of Touch in Washington" [SR, Nov. 1] should be read by everyone who voices concern about American political processes. But in so doing, they should recognize that Mr. Frankel doesn't get at the distinctions between the public *wants* and the public *needs*. Nor does he indicate that the main reason for much of the gap between public sentiment and opinion is apathy on the part of so many who say they are concerned but aren't willing to participate in political processes—save perhaps via protest devices.

Political parties and legislators and bureaucrats will be responsive only when there is sufficient participation by those concerned with the current alleged lack of responsiveness. It won't happen from opinion polls, at least not wisely.

ADAM C. BRECKENRIDGE,  
Lincoln, Neb.

## Macaulay's History

HENRY STEELE COMMAGER'S "The Americanization of History" [SR, Nov. 1] contains what must be a typographical error in a sentence beginning "Just before the Revolution, John Adams praised Mr. Macaulay's *History of England* . . ."

For "Mr." read "Mrs." Thomas Babington Macaulay was not born until 1800. The work John Adams praised must have been an early volume of *The History of England from the Accession of James I to that of the Brunswick Line* (8 vols., 1763-83) by Catharine Macaulay, nee Sawbridge, wife of George Macaulay, M.D.

GORDON G. HILL,  
Riverside, Conn.

## Praiseworthiness of Festivity

I AGREE with Harvey Cox in his "In Praise of Festivity" [SR, Oct. 25] on man's unmet need for festivity and fantasy, although joyless science paradoxically provides a more compelling reason than Professor Cox does.

If science is correct, ecological systems necessary to sustain life have been crucially altered, poisoned, and overburdened through human industrial and reproductive avarice. The penalty for this is consequential and apparently unalterable after a certain point, a point we may well be passing now. But even in face of this, man does not seem collectively rational enough to save that disappearing margin which may permit survival. The penalty seems imminent.

So, we can make up for the lack of festivity in our previous two centuries while we await the consequences of that expansive enterprise to which our joyful impulses have been sublimated. We might as well go offstage dancing.

DANIEL MADAR,  
Toronto, Ontario.

AT THE RISK of being irreverent, I would like to voice a joyous "Hallelujah!" to Harvey Cox. When is it going to hit us as a people that the Renaissance is a most ironic title for an era that incorporated into its very cornerstone Praxiteles, who, with Euripides and Euclid, was the death knell of Greek civilization. How much more vital than the works of the Renaissance are the illuminated manuscripts of the Middle Ages in spite of (because of?) their blatant ignorance of anatomy. How full of dreaming, of yearning for the impossible (but never of *knowing*) they are.

Here's to Harvey Cox and to Rilke's "Unicorn," and to the savagely bitter ending of *A Thousand Clowns*.

JEANNE P. BOYD,  
New York, N.Y.

## Veteran's Mailcall

RE: Lt. Col. William C. Haponski's "Reply to a Vietnam Veteran" [SR, Oct. 25] in response to Dr. Gordon S. Livingston's "Letter from a Vietnam Veteran" [SR, Sept. 20]. Lt. Col. Haponski's reply is so out of context from the general Vietnam war picture that after reading it one could almost imagine the U.S. Army in Vietnam as a philanthropic organization. While Dr. Livingston's letter also concentrated on a small segment of military operations,

somehow I got the impression that his feelings were more related to the entire picture.

MRS. BERT F. HOSELITZ,  
Chicago, Ill.

LT. COL. HAPONSKI'S method of using *one* example (Capt. Lee Fulmer) to challenge Dr. Livingston's charge—"the evident fact that at an operational level *most* Americans simply do not care about the Vietnamese"—is poor logic. His intent is, by refuting one point (and that poorly done), to give the impression that Livingston's whole letter is invalid, the work of an extremely sensitive individual whose judgment of the situation cannot be trusted. I won't buy that. If anything, Haponski's letter proves the validity of Livingston's.

DOUGLAS K. HAYTHORNE,  
Clemson, S.C.

IT WAS A pleasure to read Lt. Col. Haponski's lucid, factual reply to Dr. Livingston's emotional description of treatment of Vietnam citizens by the American armed forces. Livingston's "Letter" leads me to believe that either he is so emotionally unstable that he cannot think rationally, or he is a purposive, unmitigated liar.

As the father of Capt. Lee Fulmer, referred to in Haponski's reply, I have kept informed of the actions of the Eleventh ACR concerning the welfare of the citizens of Vietnam.

L. L. FULMER,  
Dean, College of Education,  
Louisiana State University,  
Baton Rouge, La.



"No question about it, you really have a grievance.  
Have you thought of a marriage counselor?"

# Music to My Ears

Irving Kolodin

## A Week of Song as Well as Singers

THE LAST time Gérard Souzay was listed to sing in Philharmonic Hall, he didn't. That was the occasion of a New York Philharmonic performance of Berlioz's *Damnation de Faust* when, between one night's effort and the next day's repetition, he decided he couldn't. But there is a new atmosphere in Philharmonic Hall, and there was a fresh effort within it recently by Souzay to wipe out any prior memories.

This was, in fact, a model of what a recital can be and seldom is: an application of effort in which everything flowed in the same direction of communication from composer to listener, with the performer as intermediary. Artfully varied as it was to include matter as separated in distance as the Greek Islands and the American South, it nevertheless had one ironclad element of unity. That was Souzay's innate awareness of strengths and limitations. It directed him almost unerringly

to what he could do well, and away from what he should not do at all.

His voice, of course, has never been his greatest asset; but now, after a decade and a half of prominence, it is as good as it ever was, and in some respects better. The former condition relates to care in its use, the latter to a determined avoidance of abuse. Thus, as a fine instrument should, it has grown more responsive with age, the more so since Souzay plays upon it with a master's discrimination. Whether it was the artful elaborations by Ravel of *Cinq mélodies populaires grecques*, or Poulenc's affecting *Chansons villageoises*, or a skillfully selected assortment of Fauré ("Claire de lune," "Madrigal," "Le parfum impérissable," or "Toujours"), Souzay and his indispensable associate at the piano, Dalton Baldwin, had everything plotted to a rare coincidence of control and spontaneity. There was, in between, a Schubert group of such tasteful rarities as "Bei dir allein," "Meeres Stille," and "Der Schiffer" that had equal con-

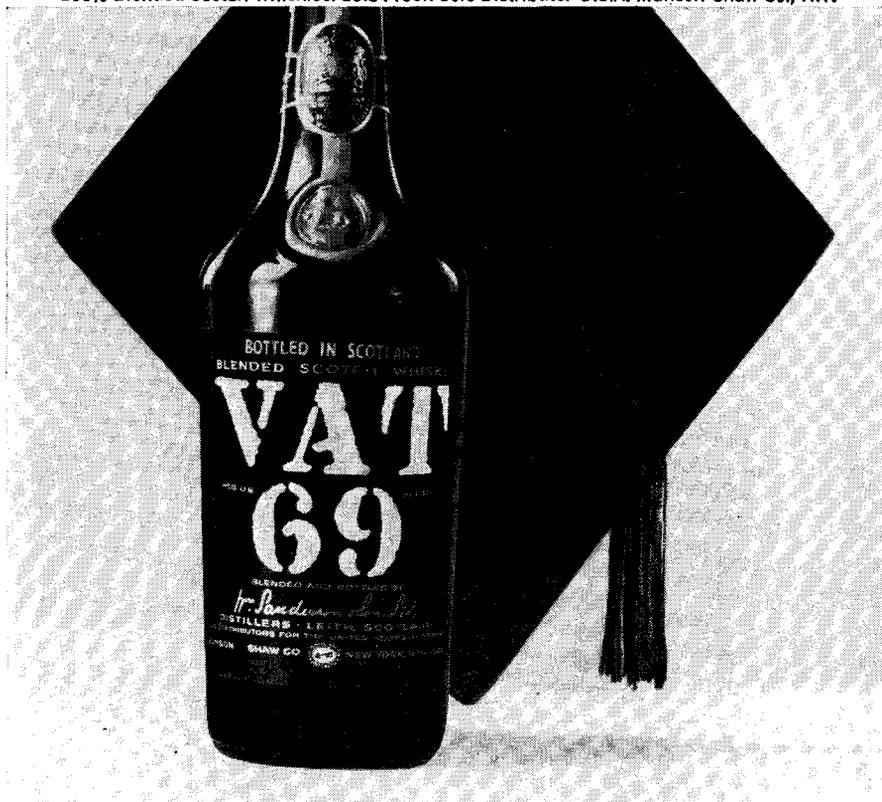
trol if less spontaneity. They were followed by the program's one outright miscalculation, a version of "Der Doppelgänger," which is really beyond his vocal capacity (in the purely quantitative sense). But it led to an "extra" that turned out to be Berlioz's "L'Absence" (from *Nuits d'été*), something few male singers would attempt and no singer, of whatever gender, could surpass. Here was the finesse of all fineses, an encore ending with a *pianissimo* that kept those who could appreciate it marveling silently through the intermission.

This would have been enough to characterize the evening as a success, but what made it the model alluded to earlier was the subsequent digression to new material by Ned Rorem and Thomas J. Flanagan. The latter's three settings of texts by John Clare could be accounted for by the circumstance that the Souzay recital was one in a series sponsored by St. John's University (to celebrate its centennial year) and Flanagan is a member of its faculty. This need be no implication of the kind of family connection that brings on artistic nepotism, for this Flanagan's compositional capabilities (not to be confused with those of the late William Flanagan) are solid and aptly employed in a vocal context. The settings tended to be a little conventional in method, but skillfully directed to the ends for which the composer elected these texts.

In his own quietly distinctive way, Rorem has trumped all the recent music of protest (and many of the written words, too) in his bitterly eloquent treatment of four selections from Whitman's *Specimen Days* to which he has given the title of *War Scenes*, and for which he has named as dedicatees "those who died in Vietnam, both sides, during the time of composition, June 20-30, 1969." There is the implication of journalism, or, at least, opportunism, in the context thus established; but Rorem has vindicated his option by the artistry he has brought to its fulfillment. As often a kind of declamation as it is a musicalization of the texts—the dying and the dead, the wounded and the maimed are its sad cast of characters—Rorem's results nevertheless become *compositions* through the constant interplay of intervallic values, the rise and fall of the prosody, the illuminating interjections of a shaft of pianistic color here, a muffled throb of silence there. It is a sizable accomplishment for Rorem, and he deserved not only the obeisance tendered by Souzay, but every bit of the applause that the performers directed toward him.

Brave man that he is, Souzay sang both the Flanagan and the Rorem sequences in the language of the poets as

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