

Listener-supported
Pacifica Radio
for Southern California
Studios at 3729 Cahuenga Boulevard
North Hollywood, California
Mail address:
Los Angeles, California 90038
877-5583 and 984-2420

Tuesday morning



Dear Sylvia:

By the time you receive this letter you will already have in your hands the excerpted tape dub of the Liebler-Lomax colloquy(sic) which I had promised some weeks ago. My tape recorder has again gone on the 'Fritz' and I had to wait until my Hi-Fi store would take the time to make a duplicate of the relevant passages.

The most recent missive from you is a Xerox copy of a letter to Harold in which you record for posterity your poetic prowess (onomatopoeia intended) in a lyric ode lambasting Liebler in the equivalent of an almost perfect sonnet form. It surpasses even Ogden Nash on the contemporary scene and its general cosmic awareness raises it to a level of those celebrated versifiers of old. Within its own framework of all-pervading hermetic anarchy(!) I find it wholly, but wholly irresistible. I ask only for the rights to first public performance and express permission to tape my own interpretation for an exclusive recording pressed by our own disc distributor: "Truth Records". Thus it will be available only in certain climes throughout the country, accessible only to those capable and willing to pay the very high price "Truth" commands in the marketplace. Thus your lyric and my realization of it will be quite unavailable in the Southern Extremities (i.e. New Orleans, Dallas, perhaps even Midlothian), at least one side of Delancey Place in Philadelphia (my aunt and uncle live across the street in the same block on the West side). Truth has no outlet among certain summer transients of Newtonville, Mass., and the possibility of opening an outlet in Beverly Hills, Calif., is becoming increasingly remote. Indeed, I rarely see or talk to my potential clients there who have appetites for only the "sensational" and "quick sell" items. Let them all run after phantoms; they will, hopefully, return when they realize that "cheap" and "phony" quite "dishonest" merchandize cannot prevail.

Glad the Ballet Programme arrived in tact. The tape was airmailed yesterday in its own plastic container sealed with transparent tape.

There is so much I want to say and yet the propriety of saying it has prevented me from phoning or writing in recent weeks. There is a further reason I have been absolutely terrified of talking with you. As soon as your taped comments arrived I played them and found the tape was so obviously and hopelessly unusable that I was in a state of despair. The director of Public Affairs at the station would not let me contact WBAI in New York directly to see if they might have sent us a copy, not the master tape itself. She preferred to handle this matter herself. In any case we didn't know until the middle of last week that what they had sent was, indeed, the master tape. The engineers at the station vainly tried to see if it could be improved in transfer to another tape, but it was of no avail. I felt that at this time of year with your book coming out and the pressure of your work generally, I

Pacifica is an educational foundation organized to receive tax-deductible contributions for Pacifica Radio: KPFA-FM, 94.1 and KPFB-FM, 89.3, 2207 Shattuck Avenue, Berkeley, California 94704; KPFK-FM, 90.7, 3729 Cahuenga Boulevard, North Hollywood, California 91062; and WBAI-FM, 99.5, 30 East 39th Street, New York, New York 10016.

Listener-supported

Pacific Radio

for Southern California

Studios at 3729 Cahuenga Boulevard

North Hollywood, California

Mail address:

Los Angeles, California 90038

877-5583 and 984-2420



pacifica
kpfk-fm 90.7

-2-

couldn't ask you to do another taping at some later date (it was decided last week that my programme will not air date until Nov 22 and that it will be three hours long). But on the other hand your commentary is playing a major part, it's the cornerstone of the critical viewpoint in my format that I'll frankly be lost without you. Indeed, on the basis of those portions of the tape that were audible I felt that I wanted you to be even more expansive and detailed and that I was wrong in curtailing your remarks by my provisional remarks that you keep your replies to 2½ minutes. Should you accede to a further taping (if not at WBAI where they now promise to be especially careful in any remake, then either at your home where I'd make available a good mike and machine at my expense to tape at 7½ ips on 1½ mil. acetate) I would even like to expand the range of questions. These replies could be taped in September or the first ten days in October, but probably not much later than that. Ironically, the Curtis Crawford tape came out all right. The tape that he recorded on was reject tape and not properly erased but capable of being dubbed onto a clean tape that I can edit. I must say I thought he made his weakest case for the Commission yet, and ~~was~~ generally was unimpressed by CBS. It was inconceivable to us here that WBAI could so botch a recording session, but they did the impossible. Was it sheer carelessness? Didn't they monitor the recording? Were they inexperienced volunteers or salaried staff members? We have yet to get satisfactory answers to these questions, but the whole affair is inexcusable and I'm terribly embarrassed by ~~outcome~~. I hope you'll forgive me inasmuch as I had no control over these circumstances.

Saturday morning:

Well, I've lost a few days. Actually I've been filming in two movies, the most prominent of the two being "Ice Station Zebra" with Rock Hudson and Patrick McGeehan at MGM. Always on call, I have to be ready to go to the studio practically at the drop of a hat. So please forgive the 'serialism' involved in the production of this letter. Naturally, I'm glad to be working again after so many months and I hope now that all my medical bills are paid I'll be able to make at least some kind of token contribution to Mr. Arnoni's TMO which I understand is in real difficulty. Please give my warm regards to M.S. when you see him. Everyone here so liked his interview on the station and his public appearance, as you know, was magnificent.

The second paragraph of this letter is really not to be understood as an attack on any one of the critics indifferently alluded to, but simply as a gentle, prodding bit of satirical writing inspired by your masterly sonnet. And it is something very personal for you alone. (I hope I'm not being malicious.)

Relationships here with fellow critics become more and more difficult and strained with the passing of each day. As soon as my "summary report"(sic) is completed and broadcast I think I'll simply retire from the fray. It takes someone insensitive and thick skinned to cope with all the ins and outs of the game. Experience has shown me I lack these necessary qualifications.

Pacifica is an educational foundation organized to receive tax-deductible contributions for Pacifica Radio: KPFA-FM, 94.1 and KPFB-FM, 89.3. 2207 Shattuck Avenue, Berkeley, California 94704; KPFK-FM, 90.7, 3729 Cahuenga Boulevard, North Hollywood, California 91062; and WBAI-FM, 99.5, 30 East 39th Street, New York, New York 10016.

Listener-supported
Pacifica Radio
for Southern California
Studios at 3729 Cahuenga Boulevard
North Hollywood, California
Mail address:
Los Angeles, California 90038
877-5583 and 984-2420

-3-

I have written to Bobbs-Merrill asking about the possibility of getting the galley sheets to your book in order to review it in my programme. While I was sworn to secrecy (to the point of absurdity I thought, especially in retrospect) by Maggie concerning a trip to Mark Lane's home in Palo Alto last month, I am told you know the particulars of that trip (indeed so does everyone else remotely connected with the critic community). When Maggie was perusing the galleys she told me that my name was listed among the acknowledgements; naturally, I am quite touched (even flattered—although I know that was not your intent) and feel not a little unworthy at that kind of recognition in view of the rather paltry contribution to research by me!

Finally, some good news. My back brace was removed last week and I was permitted to swim the very same day! Naturally, I was quite fatigued (or had that sensation) after the first couple of days without that kind of support, but the doctor assured me this was to be expected and that apart from working I would probably not have to wear it at all unless there was a slight recurrence of pain.

While he was examining me I went over with him ~~certain~~ certain of the items in the Kennedy autopsy and the FBI supplementary reports. It seems that he knows "J. Boswell"; ~~when~~ the two of them served in the Navy. He recollects caring for the Boswell child who suffers(ed) from cerebral palsey. He described Boswell Sr. as being a "very tight-lipped" individual, but thought it might be worth trying out a few questions on the autopsy to him nonetheless (if my style and syntax are becoming as confused, verbose and elliptical as they obviously are at this point, I herewith ascribe these defects to the influences of Harold Weisberg and my current mental and spiritual anguish).

I hope the heat in New York (the kind, incidentally, we are now "enjoying") has abated and that you are more comfortable than when we last spoke on the telephone.

With the most affectionate good wishes,

Love,

Bill

Pacifica is an educational foundation organized to receive tax-deductible contributions for Pacifica Radio: KPFA-FM, 94.1 and KPFB-FM, 89.3, 2207 Shattuck Avenue, Berkeley, California 94704; KPFK-FM, 90.7, 3729 Cahuenga Boulevard, North Hollywood, California 91062; and WBAI-FM, 99.5, 30 East 39th Street, New York, New York 10016.

