

Noted British critic views pieces of career

By JACQUELINE LEAR
Daily Collegian Staff Writer

Phillip Radcliffe, music and theatre critic for two London newspapers, The Daily Mail and The Sunday Times, says his tenet for writing is "One man in the arena is worth 100 critics."

Students of theatre and journalism received pointers from the leading British critic, broadcaster and head of communications at the University of Manchester when he visited the University this past week.

In an open session last Friday at the Playhouse Theatre he said he views his position simply as "a person who is getting paid for stating his opinion." In the case of some stage reviews, he said his favorable criticism did not prevent the production's from falling.

He said that choosing a reviewer is a selective process. Usually, Radcliffe said, he can choose or refuse to cover an event for his two employing newspapers.

Radcliffe was a casual theatre and symphony-goer and college student at the University of Sheffield. He found one course in practical criticism particularly intriguing.

"We had to read classical writings. Given extracts, we had to identify the author, the period of the piece and then criticize the writing."

After Sheffield, Radcliffe served with the Royal Navy and the British Intelligence Corps during which time he was trained at Cambridge University as a Russian interpreter. He said movie reviewing was his passion in those days.

About 1963, Radcliffe traveled with and interviewed the Beatles. "I was supposed to do just about everything along with them but step onto the stage." He said that neither he nor anyone knew back then about the Beatles future popularity. "The Beatles were happy just to be heard outside of Liverpool at that time," he said.

Radcliffe worked (excepting some minor writing phases, in various capacities as a book reviewer for the Sunday Times Literary Supplement, a

dance reviewer, and as a commentator on "real theatre."

Sometimes he has received shallow comments from actors in response to his criticism, he said. "Upon interviewing one actor who played the role of Othello, I asked him how he felt after performing the character. The actor responded, 'Well, I feel as though I've been run over by a bus,'" Radcliffe recalled.

At times, however good the intentions of the critic, they remain unimplemented ideals in the face of a newspaper's mandates of article deadlines and limitations of space.

The angle of presentation in theatrical works is an element to which Radcliffe keeps attuned. He illustrated his point by comparing his approach in critiquing Benjamin Britten's comic opera, "Albert Herring" for two newspapers — The Sunday Times and the Daily Mail.

He wrote in the Daily Mail: "I defy anyone, yes anyone with the slightest sense of humour to go to the opera any night in Chester this week — and not have a good laugh."

Radcliffe said he was interested in the study-abroad program which sends University students to the University of Manchester, where he has been a faculty member since 1969. He assisted in the development of "The Mass Media in Britain" course. This was Radcliffe's third visit to the campus. He was a guest lecturer in 1972 and 1975.

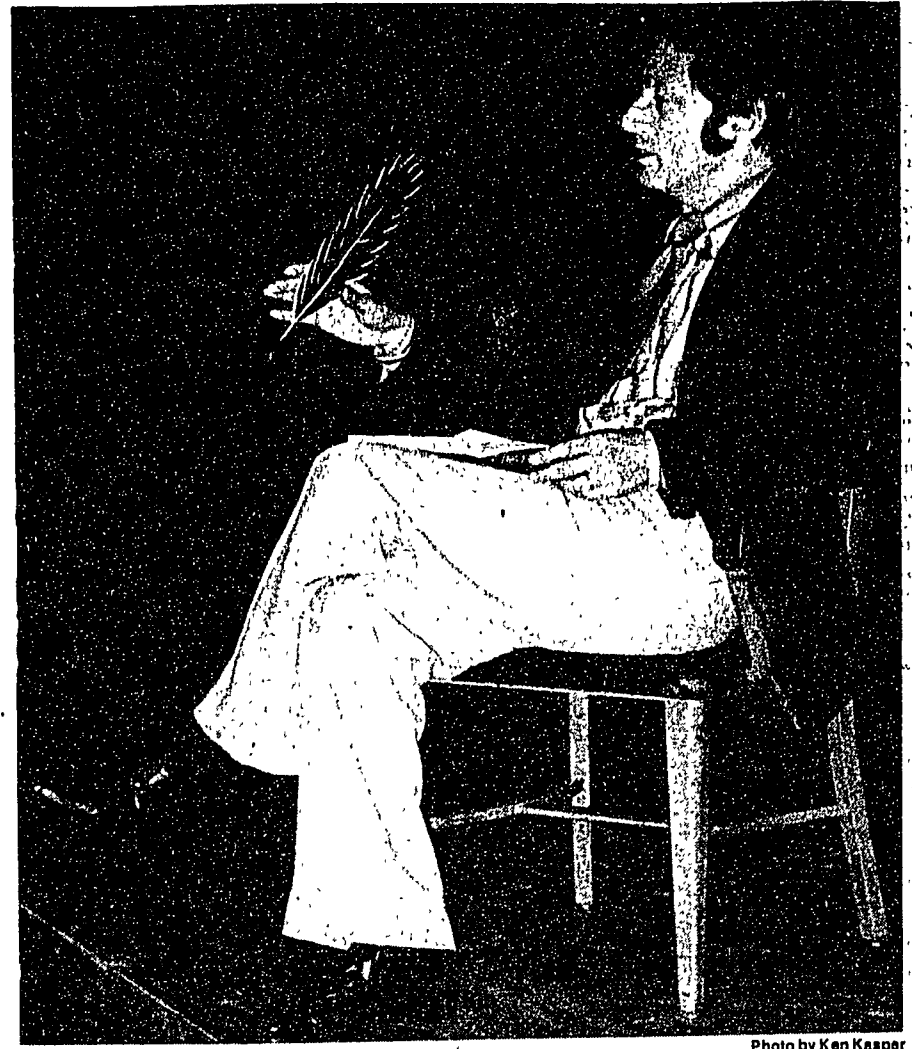


Photo by Ken Kesper

the Collegian arts

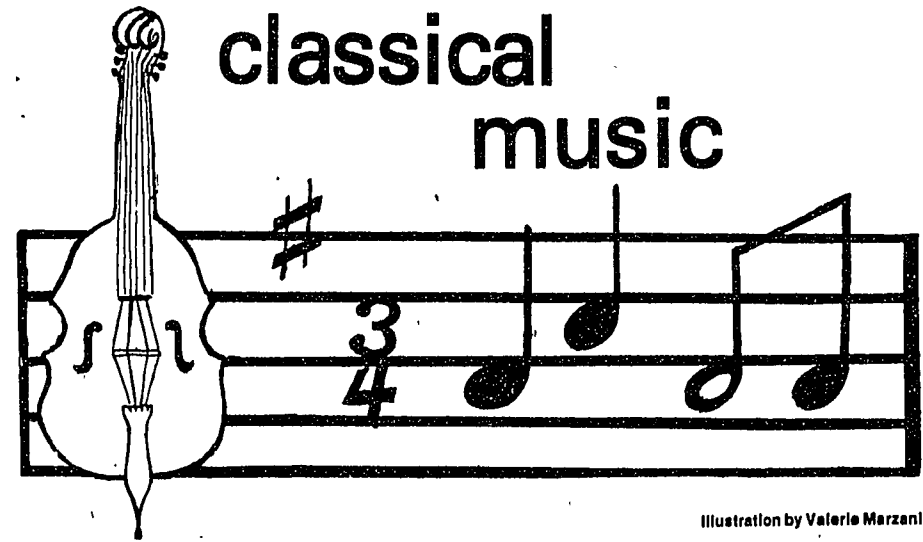


Illustration by Valerie Marzani

Music critics don't fiddle around or steal bows

By SAM LEVY
Daily Collegian Staff Writer

I wish to deviate for once from the solemnity of music reviews and devote these lines to some lighter fare. The purpose is, apparently, not easy to understand — to show to all concerned that music critics, and critics in general, are not frustrated, conniving souls who attack with the word what they cannot perform in the deed and who lack the slightest trace of humor.

I have long been an exponent of the pun. Many people are driven almost to the breaking point when I get started but I am, nonetheless, proud of my trait. I am not as proficient as I was once a-pun time, but pun warfare is my best weapon to show that our constant quest for

perfection does not disqualify us as human beings.

As a member of the staff, I must keep score of the latest musical happenings. I must endure many performances, live and recorded, some of which are good while others are real clef-hangers. If I do not write responsibly, I can get into some real treble and my tenor as a writer will be cut short.

That is the only way to reach first bass as a music critic. If you do not know something, of chorus you must inchoir if you want your doubts and fears to be put to rest, for good measure.

I wish to address the many aspiring musicians who are now learning to read music. You must C sharp if you do not want to B flat. You will have done

yourself a great D'd if you can A'd yourself in reading music and learning the B't. (G! I cannot think of anything for E or F. I guess I'm not a natural after all. That is not a step in the right direction.)

The art of singing is a particular interest of mine and I have many observations to make and opinions to voice.

I do get keyed up when I hear a singer sing flat or sharp. I do not want to put in a pitch for any favorite singer but I do want to recognize prominence in certain areas.

When a great tenor like Placido Domingo or Luciano Pavarotti involves himself in a juicy part, he can really make it role. Pavarotti can also hit a

high C with a lot of punch. In the area of German song, Dietrich Fischer-Dieskau is a leader. Many operagoers shy away from the major bass roles that they consider too deep for them. (That was a low blow.)

Symphony orchestras are instrumental in delivering much pleasure. I will not be long-winded and string up any poor conductors. I do not want to get feedback from the high brass or drum up any criticism.

Phonograph records receive much attention in my reviews. Just for the record, there have been some really groovy ones lately, though standards have declined. I do not want to label any record companies as offenders, though. Christmas records are a good example

of the popularity of classical music recordings. Record stores that never stock classical albums the rest of the year suddenly are overflowing with oratorios and cantatas. Alongside the Loggins and Messina's there are "Largo's" and "Messiah's" which the stores then handle in great quantities.

A lot of what you hear on a record depends on the quality of the playback equipment you own. Even in the beginning of the era of high fidelity, there were still some phonographs with the notorious Two Ton Tone Arm. It is easy to turn the tables and to needle the manufacturers of this primitive equipment in our more sophisticated age of quadraphonic sound. It must be remembered they were just "doing their

thing" and it would be unfair to do anything to cramp their stylus.

Fine tuning is of the utmost importance in modern record playing equipment. The tone of the many test reports shows this. Nobody likes wooden sound, especially of a singing voice. It adversely affects the timber of the voice, which goes against the grain of many connoisseurs of fine recorded sound.

In my countless hours of music listening, I have encountered many musicians of note. This is an account, small in scale, of the more humorous side of the music critic. I hope it has convinced those of you who do not hold us in high regard. A major point: elephants just produce ivory keys, not ivory towers.

We have a few openings in the vineyard. Come labor with us. The hours are long. The pay is low. All we promise is the opportunity to help others and a quiet pride in your work. A few people will even thank you. One will be eternally grateful. His name is God.

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UNIVERSITY CALENDAR
Wednesday, October 19
SPECIAL EVENTS

Colloquy, "The Wide World of Health." David Hufford, Hershey Medical Center, on "Visions and Hallucinations: Fact or Fiction?" 11 a.m., HUB main lounge; Karl Stoeckel and Elsworth Buskirk on "Assessment of Human Performance," 1 p.m., Room 121 Noll Lab; Jeremy Rifkin on "Who Should Play God?" 8 p.m., HUB ballroom.

Graduate Council meeting, 3 p.m., Room 101 Kern.
Free U, frisbee, 5 p.m., women's athletic field.
Newman Student Association meeting, 6:45 p.m., Room 322 HUB.
Ag. Engineering Club meeting, 7 p.m., Room 124 Ag. Engr. Bldg.
Chess Club meeting, 7 p.m., HUB game room.
Free U, Disciples of Christ meeting, 7 p.m., Room 319 Willard.
Free U, introduction to Bah' ai faith, 7 p.m., Room 307 Boucke.
P.S. Amateur Radio Club meeting, 7 p.m., Room 202 Engineering D.
Traffic Appeals Court meeting, 7 p.m., Room 317 HUB.
Commonspace Theatre, The Wild Bunch, 7:30 and 9:30 p.m., Room 112 Kern.
Free U, AOH seminar, "Stoves and Backpack Cookery," 7:30 p.m., Appalachian Outdoor House.
Free U, banjo interest group, 7:30 p.m., Room 316 Boucke.
Free U, conscious dreaming, 7:30 p.m., U Club, red room.
Free U, jazz workshop, 7:30 p.m., Room 111 Chambers.
Free U, space exploration: ppf, 7:30 p.m., Room 232 Hammond.
Hetzl Union Board meeting, 7:30 p.m., Room 323 HUB.
Landscape Architecture Student Society, 7:30 p.m., Room 321 Sackett.
Nittany Grotto meeting, 7:30 p.m., Room 217 Willard.
Afro-American Studies Forum. James E. Lewis, Morgan State University, on "African and Afro-American Art," 8 p.m., HUB assembly hall.
PSORML meeting, 8 p.m., Room 209 Willard.
SIMS meeting, 8 p.m., Room 318 HUB.
HUB Coffeehouse, 8:30 p.m., Room 301 HUB.
Thalia Trio, 8:30 p.m., Music Bldg. recital hall.

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