

pected audience reactions, by incorporating them into the play. Some jokes were delivered as asides, but not as a rule. Sometimes a drily spoken line referred to a remark from the audience or to a recent local event. It was acknowledged with roaring applause while the actors stayed in character. The movements of the actors were naturally awkward (natural in their awkwardness), the blocking seemed emotional and motivated by the flow of the play, the expressions sincere.

During intermission, I went backstage, where I met the director, Mrs. Karoline Tschauner, a friendly elderly lady. I found out that there was no blocking at all, since there were no rehearsals. The actors moved according to their own discretion. This was a true impromptu and improvisatory theatre, which presented a different show each night (except Wednesday).

The actors, who know each other well and have been working together for several years, meet at 6 p.m. At this time, they are given the scenario and

their parts. They are typecast in a way, but Mrs. Tschauner said that the actor playing the idiotic servant was also capable of playing the tragic lover; the old peasant could play a Hanswurst.

The actors then discuss their relationships and some jokes of the day (mostly political or social) before the performance. The show starts at 7:30 p.m. The entrances are "suggested" by the director, but the exits are up to the actor's discretion.

No story is ever repeated. An original play is given each night. Mrs. Tschauner said she got the ideas for her scenarios from "the daily papers, cartoons. I really have more ideas than showdays in a summer."

The actors come from various fields and occupations: clerks, housewives, teachers, businessmen, artisans, etc. Their profit is minimal. They do it, obviously, for their own pleasure and delight, dilettantes in the best sense of the word.

Ilse Perl
Salt Lake City, Utah.

American Film Institute Catalog

The American Film Institute has just published an introductory two-book volume entitled *Feature Films: 1921-1930*. The volume is the first in a series of the *American Film Institute Catalog of Motion Pictures Produced in the United States*.

One book in the volume, which runs to 936 pages, lists feature motion pictures in alphabetic order, with comprehensive information given under each entry, including production and copyright details, as well as content description and genre (e.g., literary, dramatic, non-dramatic, etc.)

The second book in the volume has, along with a full Credit Index, a very

important Subject Index that deals in depth with the topical content of films listed in the first book of the volume. This index covers general areas other than the film per se, such as events and trends of the period covered by the volume, historical events referred to in films, theatre, actors and actresses, costumes, places, etc.

Kenneth W. Munden, executive editor of the *American Film Institute Catalog*, used special computer technology to process data. The volume, however, is not the first in the order in which the complete series will finally appear on the shelf. The *Catalog* will eventually begin with a general volume

for the period 1893–1910, including newsreels of that period, followed by *Feature Films: 1911–1920*.

The two-book volume, *Feature Films: 1921–1930* (1,653 pages), costs \$55.00 postpaid in the United States and Canada (\$60.50 elsewhere). It is published by R. R. Bowker Company.

The volume should be of great value to the researcher interested in documentation of theatrical and/or film history, as well as to scholars in other disciplines.

Museum Exit

THE EDITOR:

I regret to have to report that the Brander Matthews Dramatic Museum no longer exists.

The Theatre Arts Library has no budget, but does exist.

Maybe later we will be given a budget? It's doubtful.

Paul R. Palmer
Theatre Arts Librarian
Columbia University

TRAGEDY and FEAR

WHY MODERN TRAGIC DRAMA FAILS

by John von Szeliski

In this provocative and stimulating book John von Szeliski confronts the question of the essential nature of tragedy: is it optimistic or pessimistic. Ably arguing that tragedy must be ultimately optimistic, he demonstrates, by a discussion of a number of modern "tragic" dramas, that the widespread pessimism of the twentieth century rules out most of the rewards of effective tragic art.

268 pages 6" x 8" \$10.95

THEATRE DOUBLE GAME

by Samuel Selden

This original contribution to theatre knowledge shows how theatre at its best excites, illumines, and fulfills its spectators in a spirit of play, and how the skilled theatre artist creates this. *Dramatics* said of the book that it "... should be valuable to all directors, actors and playwrights."

Publishers' Weekly said that it "... should have appeal for serious college youth, for whom (Selden) has a lot of practical knowledge to impart."

136 pages 5½" x 8½" \$6.00

Order from your bookstore or

THE UNIVERSITY OF
NORTH CAROLINA PRESS
Chapel Hill, North Carolina 27514