

Letters

TO THE EDITOR:

I am one of those people who found it hard to accept the reenactment of the Revolutionary War battles, especially the one at Concord, as political theatre. It was a spectacle intended in fact to reenforce the government's notion that the American Revolution is something to be reenacted—with attention to historical detail, of course—but with no respect for the issues of that day or the parallels to the issues of our own.

Author Christopher Canaan makes fleeting reference to a Peoples' Bicentennial songfest and political rally that occurred at Concord, notes that the President and 160,000 people were on hand, and lets it go at that. No mention of the policemen wearing reddish-orange rain coats driving protesters away from the Old North Bridge; the President on the "Tory" side of the river—where the British stood 200 hundred years ago—getting drowned out by protest chants while making a hawkish speech that even

supportive newspapers found "inappropriate"; of the Peoples' Bicentennial Commission Rally that drew 45,000 to the Minuteman National Park for an all-night rally that included actors reading from the actual words of the founders of the Republic and the revolutionaries who waged war that April day; nothing about the real theatre of the moment, of the high school bands marching down lily-white streets, of hawkers pedalling Bicentennial momentos, of the effigies of American corporations, or of the surrealistic mixture of the folks who came to observe the reenactment and the ones who wanted a revival of the revolution itself.

The President's carefully staged arrival was political theatre; his alarmed retreat, theatre also. The day was theatre and deserved to be treated as such rather than as a mere backdrop to a staged reenactment that titillated its participants far more than its spectators.

Danny Schechter
Boston, Mass.

New Books

Les Voies De La Création Théâtrale, Vol. IV, edited by Denis Bablet and Jean Jacquot. Paris: Editions Du Centre National De La Recherche Scientifique. 1975. 427 pp. 80 F. (hardcover)

Although the goal of this series is to examine the relation of production to text, the wide variety of approaches to documentation make it a practical resource for practitioners as well as theatre analysts. This fourth volume is largely devoted to Victor Garcia's 1970 production of *The Maids*. The articles are the result of the collaboration of ten analysts who worked closely with the production from its rehearsal through performance. Diaries of rehearsal procedure, examination of audience composition, polls of spectators' reaction to specific artistic choices, and textual and scenographic analyses are among the approaches included.

The remaining sections include similar studies of productions of *Death of a Salesman*, *The Iceman Cometh*, *The Homecoming*, and Mrozek's *Karol, Strip-Tease, Out At Sea*, and *Tango*. The articles are heavily illustrated with photographs, designs, diagrams, and graphs.

Mime Journal, Department of Speech and Dramatic Art, University of Arkansas, Fayetteville. \$5.00 for two issues.

Each issue of the magazine is devoted to a special topic within "mime, movement for the theatre, and related topics." The current Mask issue includes interviews with the Mummenschanz and Etienne Decroux, and articles on African masked theatre and the masks of Irene Corey, a contemporary American costume designer.