

'Bible on Broadway'—A Hit

New York — (CPF) — The Bible and Broadway — although they may seem to be the unlikely of partners — have been teamed to bring about one of the longest-running productions in show business history.

Now beginning its seventh consecutive season, "The Bible on Broadway" is a monthly series of talks and discussions on how the events, personalities and values in Scripture are related to current offerings on the Broadway stage and on the screen.

Led by Rabbi Arthur T. Buch and held in his Manhattan synagogue, the sessions are attended by stars, writers, producers and directors of all faiths, who come to discuss their current productions before intimate audiences in one of the synagogue's assembly rooms.

Among those who have taken part recently are Agnes Moorehead, producer Dore Schary, Darryl Hickman (who took over the lead from Bobby Morse in "How to Succeed in Business Without Really Trying"), Irving Jacobson (currently playing Sancho Panza in "Man of La Mancha"), Negro performers Ossie Davis and Ruby Dee, and Maria Karnilova, female lead in "Fiddler on the Roof."

"Many plays have exactly the same idea as does a specific Bible story," says Rabbi Buch. "After all, the number of plots is limited. You can trace the basis of almost every original plot to the Bible."

To illustrate that "Bible on Broadway" does not limit its subjects to obviously religious plays, Rabbi Buch suggests that even a very light comedy like "Never Too Late" has Biblical connections. The play, recently made into a movie starring Maureen O'Sullivan and Paul Ford, was about a married couple who are well along in age but who learn that they are going to have a baby. The husband and his grown children are aghast, certain that their friends and neighbors will laugh and make wisecracks.

"But," says Rabbi Buch, "this is the same as the story of Sarah and Abraham—how, in their old age, they discover Sarah is to give birth. Sarah, too, fears people will laugh and, indeed, names her son 'Isaac'—which means 'laughter.'"

In other Broadway productions, the discussion is more directly to the theme of the play. For "How to Succeed..." the conclusion was that the "hero" was not one in the Biblical sense. He might get to the top, be a success, etc., but from a Biblical, religious point of view he was not a success because his approach to life was profoundly against Biblical, religious teaching.

When "Fiddler on the Roof" was the topic, Miss Karnilova talked about the mother figure as represented in the musical (selected last year by the National Catholic Theatre Conference as best religious drama). The actress claimed that women in Biblical days and in tightly-

knit, religious, tradition-bound Old World villages felt a greater sense of fulfillment than they do today because more was expected of them then.

Rabbi Buch, who always starts off each session with a brief talk on what Biblical connection he sees, said "Fiddler" emphasized—how religious tradition holds people together, so that even when the Jewish villagers had to leave Tzarist Russia and emigrate to America, their religious traditions maintained them.

"Religious tradition plays this cementing role," says the rabbi, "for both the Jewish and Catholic people and indeed all western people who shared this Judeo-Christian religious culture, with its traditions. 'Fiddler' is the very story of religious tradition, showing it to be a thing in some ways as precarious as a fiddler on the roof, yet still the thing which keeps tune all over the world."

Rabbi Buch, who is in his mid-fifties, began "Bible on Broadway" shortly after the TV quiz scandals of the early 1960's, "when there was a prevalent feeling in America that we were a corrupt country, that our entertainment business as a

whole was corrupt. My motivation in starting 'Bible on Broadway' was to prove that we have plays and movies with positive values, that the whole entertainment business is far from corrupt but often has a good, positive effect and inspiration."

A long-time advocate of ecumenical activities, Rabbi Buch taught Jewish history at the Jesuit-operated Scranton University and was made an honorary member of the Atracite Methodist Ministry of Pennsylvania.

"No matter where I went, I tried to make my ministry fit the life of the place," Rabbi Buch said. "While in Scranton, I felt it necessary to serve the larger community and so I agreed to teach at the Catholic university there. While in Paterson, N.J., I felt the most important thing there was the furthering of community service, so I ended up serving as head of the local Community Chest. In New York, the big thing was the Great White Way."

His "Bible on Broadway" has had more influence than he realized was possible. One actress told him that until she heard how the play she was appearing in was connected with the Bible, "I never really understood it."

(Catholic Press Features)



Joy, Next Time in Vietnam

Philadelphia — (RNS) — Vietnam-bound, this nun is leaving behind an album of songs that may well wind up on the "hit" list. She is Sister Jessica Jablonicky of Toronto, Ontario, talented guitar accompanist of 11 "singing nuns" from the Medical Mission Sisters. Several of them, including Sister Jessica, are now bound for mission duty overseas. Before ending training in Philadelphia, the Sisters completed an album, "Joy is Like the Rain," for the Avant Garde recording company of New York. Sister Miriam Therese Winter of White Plains, N.Y., composed the 12 original folksongs, basing them on Scripture. Sister Jessica, an x-ray technician, has been assigned to Holy Family Hospital at Qui Nhon, South Vietnam.

Theater News

Revivals Are Fun

by EUPHEMIA WYATT

ANNIE GET YOUR GUN — the veteran Franz Allers, leads the orchestra and Richard Rodgers is responsible for the production. Sophistication is so cheerfully ignored that the worst Annie squanders on success is to learn how to read. "Annie" contributes a spray of good nature to the stage.

GUYS AND DOLLS — That fabulous journalist, Damon Runyon, who enjoyed writing about the Great White Way preferred a pinch of sentiment in his satire to modify the sting. His sense of humor was as pervasive as his kindly insight and he managed to insert a childish appeal to his Broadway gamblers with their limited mentality, their correct speech and impeccable brown fedoras.

One thing proved by "ANNIE" is that age is really an unimportant factor on the stage. After the first five minutes, who really cares if Ethel Merger was twenty years younger when "Annie" was a smash hit. You accept her 1966 Annie and are grateful that she can bring to a world steeped in black thoughts the gaiety and good will she radiates.

Springtime is in the air—the curtain rises and the pretty young ladies of Cincinnati give Frank Butler the welcome he enjoys. Then Annie strolls in with her little sisters and brother and the rifle, the symbol of her motto, "Anything you can do, I can do better."

But, as always, her masterpiece is "You Can't Get a Man with a Gun." Not until Annie takes the advice of wise-old Chief Sitting Bull and convinces Frank Butler that he is the better shot, does she win him. Their new duet, "An Old Fashioned Wedding" had to be repeated four times.

Harry Belafonte still plays Sitting Bull who adopts Annie as a Sioux in a ballet danced with tremendous vigor by James Rogers who took "My Fair Lady" to Japan. Bruce Yarnell endows Frank Butler with a commanding presence and a rich voice. Jack Sydow was the director.



Adelaide of the Hotbox Night Club, who has been engaged to Nathan Detroit for all of fourteen years. Her singing of "Take Back Your Mink" and "Adelaide's Lament" has captivated audiences for over a decade.

Dale Malone as Nicely-Nicely halts the action with "Sit Down, You're Rockin' the Boat" and so does Clarence Norstrom with "More I Cannot Wish You." Harry the Horse and Big Julie of East Cicero are superlatively tough until Sky lays Big Julie in the dust.

The decor is based on the original by Jo Mielziner and the stage business by George Kaufman.

Sky was never better played than by Hugh O'Brian who created Wyatt Earp on TV. Jan Murray takes up the torch from Sam Levine as Nathan. Barbara Meister has a flutelike voice as Sarah and carries off Puerto Rico as a little girl's comp. One sign of age there is—the costumes at the Hotbox which were once startling now seem conservative. Jean Dalrymple, the producer of City Centre's Light Opera Company has another of her triumphs—a half price!



Maureen O'Sullivan and Paul Ford in the film "Never Too Late." A simple light comedy about late pregnancy—or a modern version of Sarah and Abraham?

Blue Max Ad 'Misleading'

New York — (RNS) — The National Catholic Office for Motion Pictures gave a "B" rating (morally objectionable in part

or all) to the Blue Max, an action film on World War I, and condemned its advertising aimed at young people as "misleading."

Produced by 20th Century-Fox, the movie was found morally objectionable by the former Legion of Decency because of "two grossly explicit scenes of love-making," which, it said, "have no place in a motion picture being widely advertised by its distributors as an action film with the clear implication that it is suitable for general audiences."

The agency said the film's "graphic depiction of the sexual encounters is dramatically unjustifiable for the adult viewer and can be seriously harmful to young audiences."

Recent Movie Ratings

ous introduction of obscene gestures for their own sake. Class B What Did You Do in the War, Daddy? Objection: In this frequently tasteless comedy, particularly objectionable is the self-con-

IN THE WINGS

How to Steal a Million. — "Ars gratia artis. Audrey Hepburn and Peter O'Toole in an elegant comedy about the joys of burglary and forging the old masters." — Time Mag.

Khartoum — "Interesting failure to portray mysterious British soldier in Africa, Charlton Heston and Laurence Olivier in Cinema." — New Yorker.

Fr. Sebastian To Be Honored

A Silver Tea and reception will be sponsored by the Sacred Heart League, Holy Name and Parents group of Precious Blood Church on Aug. 21 from 3:30 to 7:30 p.m.

Parishioners will honor Fr. Sebastian Contagiacomo, pastor, on his 70th birthday. He has served at Precious Blood for 36 years.

FILMS ABOUT TOWN

A MENTION OF MOTION PICTURES OF MORE THAN ROUTINE INTEREST

Dr. Zhivago — "Has been called the Gone With the Wind of the Russian Revolution. While it does not pick you up and sweep you along like Gone With the Wind—did not—still does, the impressions created by the film linger long after one has seen it. With Julie Christie, Omar Sharif and Tom Courtenay, directed by David Lean." — Catholic Film News-Letter.

Morgan — "A slam-bang comic attack on the status quo. A brilliant English movie, directed by Karel Reisz and starring Vanessa Redgrave, David Warner, and Robert Stephens." — New Yorker Mag.

Walk, Don't Run — "Cary Grant plays a debonair matchmaker who tries his best to ignite sparks between Samantha Eggar and Jim Hutton, in a civilized comedy set in a crowded Tokyo flat." — Time Mag.

The Russians Are Coming, The Russians Are Coming. — "As a Soviet sailor whose sub has run aground on an island off the New England coast, Broadway's Alan Arkin makes a feature film debut that may well win him an Oscar." — Time Mag.

The Sound of Music — "The Austrian Alps are among the most beautiful places on earth. Majestic peaks, verdant meadows and deep blue lakes combine to provide an atmosphere of beauty and tranquility. They hold a special appeal for Maria (Julie Andrews), a postulant during the 1830s at the Abbey in Salzburg, who is often late for her duties because she has strayed to the mountains to wander, to indulge in grand daydreams, or to sing joyously of nature's beauty." — RCA.

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Sr. Sean Marie Takes Vows

Twenty-five Sisters of Charity pronounced first vows on Aug. 15 at ceremonies in the order's Motherhouse, Mount St. Vincent, Riverdale, New York City. From the Rochester Diocese was Sister Sean Marie Murnighan, daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Richard H. Murnighan of 239 Alpine Drive. Coadjutor Archbishop John J. Maguire of New York celebrated the Mass. COURIER-JOURNAL Friday, August 19, 1966

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