



'The Heiress' at Nazareth

A TENSE MOMENT in "The Heiress" is enacted by Jeanne Warner (right) as Catherine Sloper and Virginia Mary Fichera in the role of Aunt Pennington. Nazareth Academy's senior play, "The Heiress," will be presented Friday and Saturday, Nov. 18 and 19 at 8 p.m. William Andia is director.



'La Traviata' Due at Eastman Theatre

METROPOLITAN OPERA National Company will bring Puccini's "La Boheme" on Monday, Nov. 14 and Verdi's "La Traviata" on Tuesday, Nov. 15 to the stage of Rochester's Eastman Theatre. Scene shown is from Act One of the Verdi work which is

staged by Yoshio Aoyama. The company is the offspring of the Metropolitan Opera and the John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts making its second annual coast to coast tour of the United States and Canada.

Msgr. Little Rates His Work: Has NCOMP Gotten Through?

New York — "Today it would be A-3, maybe A-4," he said, but when Msgr. Thomas F. Little became head of the old Legion of Decency in the summer of 1953, his first act was to announce that "The Moon Is Blue" had been condemned.

The film was condemned primarily because it dared to use the words "seduce" and "virgin," and when one contrasts that rating with the A-4 given to "Who's Afraid of Virginia Woolf?" this summer, the film office's change in outlook toward motion pictures is sharply outlined.

Last week, as he prepared for a farewell testimonial luncheon in his honor, Msgr. Little said that his only regret in leaving the National Catholic Office for Motion Pictures is that NCOMP's new approach toward films — supported by Papal encyclicals, Council decrees and the U.S. hierarchy — has not yet gotten through to most Catholics.

"I think that the great majority of Catholics still look on films as a medium that can treat mature topics in a mature and responsible way. And they don't realize that there are different audiences we have to take into account in classifying films. They want us to play parent and stop every film that could possibly hurt their children.

"If we did that, there would be no respect for the Church and the position of the Church as a patron of the arts would be untenable."

Although his appointment as pastor of a parish in the Brooklyn Diocese was given as the

reason for his leaving NCOMP, there has been speculation that Msgr. Little's re-assignment was the result of pressure brought on his superiors by opponents of NCOMP's recent policies. In addition to the bitter reaction by some to the "Virginia Woolf" rating, protests have greeted NCOMP's failure to condemn such "adult" films as "The Knack," "Zorba the Greek," "Tom Jones" and "Darling," which NCOMP went on to single out as "best mature film of the year."

But close friends and associates of Msgr. Little have long been aware of his desire to return to parish work (he was an assistant pastor for seven years before his assignment to the Legion) and, too, that he had been having difficulty with his vision. He underwent a successful cataract operation a year ago, but must undergo another shortly.

His successor is not likely to be named until after the U.S. Bishop's annual meeting in November, but in all probability he will be succeeded by the Rev. Patrick J. Sullivan, S.J., who joined the Legion in 1957 as assistant executive secretary and is currently NCOMP's acting head.

"I would hope that Father Sullivan will be my successor," Msgr. Little said. "The film apostolate is his life." All of the major changes in the Legion of Decency — a new adult category, the change in the pledge from a negative to positive emphasis, a broadening of the office's review staff, a film education program, the annual awards, and others — were put into motion with the arrival of Fr. Sullivan.

But as film critic and longtime Legion consultant Moira Walsh notes, "Msgr. Little was reaching for more sensible standards before Fr. Sullivan came along."

She was referring to the old Legion's practice of regarding films as solely a "mass medium of entertainment" and classifying hundreds of films as B or C simply because they were not

considered to be fit viewing for children. Until 1958, there was no "adults-only" category; what is now the "A-3." A film had to be morally unobjectionable for children and adolescents, or the film was rated B or C. The old "Separate Classification" category (now the controversial A-4: "for adults, with reservations") was rarely used.

Msgr. Little was first assigned to the Legion as an assistant in 1947, serving under Msgr. Patrick J. Masterson. Fr. Little's first experience in classifying films was with "Black Narcissus," which starred Deborah Kerr as an Anglican nun.

"I remember that the problem we had with that picture was that moviegoers might interpret the nun's actions — which were not in keeping with the Catholic Church's teachings — as those of a Catholic nun. We thought it would misinterpret the Catholic nun."

That film was initially condemned, then, when certain unspecified "changes" were made and a prologue identifying the nun as Anglican was added, the rating was changed to A-2. (Interestingly, the very last film that Msgr. Little had a hand in rating was "Hawaii," and there too NCOMP's concern was for the religious image — presented by the overzealous Calvinist missionary on whom the film centers. It was rated A-3, with no changes or prologue.)

Shortly afterward, Msgr. Little was to be involved with some of the films that were to give the Legion of Decency its reputation as an opponent of sex in films: "The Outlaw," "Duel in the Sun," "Baby Doll," "The French Line" and the film that had just been rated when Msgr. Masterson died and Msgr. Little became Legion head: "The Moon Is Blue."

While few people objected to the Legion's opposition to sex-for-sex's sake in films, they carried over their "decency in films" stance to pictures that seriously attempted to treat divorce, promiscuity and other

previously-condemned subjects. But here, NCOMP and the former Legion-supporters have parted company.

"You hear so many people saying now, 'Oh, that's just another sex picture,' but they fail to realize that some of these films can be powerful sermons against immorality. Take 'Alfie.' The film's ending shows without doubt that a abortion brings only irrevocable grief and guilt. That picture is actually a morality play in modern dress.

"And 'Any Wednesday' is a 'sex picture,' but it has something to say about marital fidelity. A girl who's considering becoming a mistress — she can look at this film and see the inanity, the vacuousness."

In the 19 years that Msgr. Little has been associated with the Legion and NCOMP, he has seen between 3,000 and 4,000 films, but he doesn't hesitate in singling out his personal favorites.

"There are few that will always stand out: 'Sound of Music' and 'My Fair Lady' and 'Old Man and the Sea.' But there is one in particular that will always remain with me: 'On the Waterfront.' This was one of the first mature films to attack the whole problem of social injustice. I was particularly impressed with it because the priest in it was not the wishy-wash kind I've seen in so many films. He played such a dominant role and he was a very Christ-like figure. This is the film that sticks with me." (Catholic Press Features)

Paint It Black

"Paint It Black," a symposium of contemporary culture as interpreted by the "black humor" school of literary expression, will be presented by the Student Cultural Commission at St. John Fisher College Friday, Saturday, and Sunday (Nov. 4-6).

Leslie Fiedler, professor of English at the University of Buffalo, will open the program with a lecture on "Black Humor" at 7:30 p.m. Friday in St. Basil Hall auditorium. His comments will be followed by the movie "The Freaks."

"Psychodelicatessen" is the theme of the Paint It Black weekend dance scheduled for Saturday evening in Kearney auditorium.

Edward Albee's "The Sandbox" will be staged by the Nazareth-Fisher Drama Club in St. Basil Hall auditorium Sunday at 2 p.m. Sunday evening's final showing of the movie "Dr. Strangelove" will be followed by a coffee hour and discussion period in the student lounge.

At United Nations Elaine Hollis, Nazareth Academy's delegate to the Rochester Association for the United Nations, is in New York City to visit the United Nations Headquarters.

Each year delegates are chosen from different schools throughout the country to attend sessions and to study the work of the different departments of the U.N. through observation and briefing. They will have luncheons in the delegates dining room.

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