

NICK
KEPROS - 1

Oct. 4, 1980

Dear Nick,

Thank you for the notes. You have no idea--no, let me retract that: I'm sure from listening to people's responses to your own work, you have a very clear idea--how useful and interesting highly specific comments are to me. The more specific, the better, I always feel--but most people just don't bother homing in.

I want you to know that The Moments of the Wandering Jew --the shorter version of the Full play, of which Hochhimmelfahrt comprises about one-third--is having a reading at the McCarter Theatre at Princeton, directed by Rob Lanchester (whom I think you know?) on Monday, Oct. 20. After seeing all the actors who are slated for the reading in their production of Taming of the Shrew last week, I have some misgivings. They seem for the most part intelligent, energetic actors, but I wonder if they're crazy enough. Anyway, I wanted you to know.

I hope Michael Lessac will be interested by the script. Meanwhile, I'm very pleased that you are.

Bevya and I are 3-4 weeks into our workshop experiment. It's deeply interesting to me--beyond that I'm not sure how to characterize it yet.

Best,

NICK
KEPROS - 2

Sat., Dec. 27, 1980

Dear Nick,

Susan and I saw Amadeus last night. What a funny, delicate performance you've come up with in what could easily have been a one-joke role. The elegance/obtuse balance is nicely held. But the real coloring and depth come from the sense you give of a man who isn't exactly aware of his limitations, but at moments has the most awful intimations.... (Of course, you are a bit of an Austro-Hungarian Emperor, which helps!)

As to the play, I felt admiration for the largeness of its aims, but also had reservations. This trumping up of envy into a metaphysical dilemma, a Byronic stance.... I don't know, I felt Shaffer wanted to claim a stature for Salieri's suffering, but couldn't really find a basis for the claim. For me--and I realize this is an odd reaction--Salieri "drops away": the script keeps thrusting him at us, but can't manage to be as much about him as it thinks it is. The real conflict is between that Mozart and Mozart's music, with Salieri as, at most, the medium through which we experience this disparity.

I'll be in New York for the next couple of weeks. Would you like to get together? Is anything happening with my Responsa-play at Colonnades? Bevy and I have broken off our work on it in what has, I'm afraid, some overtones of personal breaking off. I feel very ready to work in new contexts, with a new director.

Again, congratulations on your work and on the success of the show.

Best,

David Cole

till JAN. 11, in New York at:

989-1648

after JAN. 11, in New Haven at:

203-~~81~~ 624-3982

(curb) mailed Feb 8 84 A/NT
-but I forgot enclosure refered
to (files for 1st of vols to
New Works project)

Sunday, Feb. 8, 1981

Dear Nick,

NICK
KEPROS -3

The group ^(Robin Hirsch) who runs the New Works Project at
the South Street Theatre (see enclosed) has asked if
they could do a staged reading of The Response
on March 23 or 30, directed by Richard Edelmanna.

I have mentioned to Robin and to Richard
your interest in the script. But not being
sure whether you wanted to work with
Richard, or under their auspices, I went
no further (also, I don't know what, if any,
casting plans they have in mind.)

In any case, I wanted you to know
this now, ~~happening~~ ~~if it strikes you as~~
a context you'd like to work in, please
let me know and I'll inform them
(I'm seeing Richard at 2⁰⁰ pm this Fri.)
If not, I'll let them go ahead and
I hope you will still want to do a
reading at Colonnades or Playwrights Horizons
or wherever.

My basic feeling is that this can either
mesh with, or go on apart from, your
interest in working on the play - depending
upon what all concerned feel most comfortable
with.

Best
David

DAVID COLE

in New Haven till

Thurs. A.M. (203-624-3982)

Thurs night (Feb 12) → Sun (Feb 15)

in New York (989-1648)

NICK KEPROS
77 Washington Place
New York, NY, 10011

RECEIVED Mon., Nov. 13, 1989

9 Nov 1989

NICK
KEPROS 4a

Dear David,

I've been away for a month, which is why you haven't heard from me.

I enjoyed Gods of the Theatre enormously. Its complexity, its humor, its profundity all appealed to me. The real accomplishment is that the characters exist on so many levels (forgive the pun) at once: as embodiments of ideas, as theatrical "positions," and as breathing beings.

The dissection of ideas, ringing the changes on a concept or the reverberations of a word, etc., is very entertaining, but reaches an almost Jesuitical finesse a little too often, bewildering the ear, if not the mind. I

received Mon, May 21, 1990

NICK
KEPROS -5a

May 12, 1990

216 N. Windsor
Los Angeles California
90004

Dear David,

Your letter was forwarded to me in LA, where I am chasing work. I've been here since mid-January, and have worked 2 days! But getting "started" here (at my age!) is no easy matter, and one has a lot of stupidity and theatrical illiteracy to confront daily. On the bright side, I've just signed with an excellent agent, and so hope for some action soon.

I was delighted to hear from you at last. I wondered if I had offended you in some

let me know what to do with the script. Thanks, Nick

mean that the reader can go back over a section until he gets it, but a listener will often be left trailing behind, feeling angry.

I started to note sections that struck me as too complex for a listening audience, but gave up as it became clear that it was a general + consistent fault. You are ultimately the only one who can decide when your penchant for "faceting" an idea has done you in, theatrically. One ends up being impatient with a script which by rights should be stimulating + charming beginning to end. I'd still love to see it done on stage: pared down + simplified, it could be delicious.

Has Brustein ever seen it? I think he'd be taken with it.

(NICK KEPROS) - 56

way, but had so many problems
& immediate chores to accomplish
I couldn't follow up. I'm glad
you found my suggestions helpful.
The work is so original and so
stimulating, it is a pity to let
its overabundance stifle its
success.

Did you ever send it to Bru-
stein as I suggested?

The script is ensconced in
my NY apt., unincubated, so
it'll have to wait till I come
back (next month?) for me to
return it to you, which I'll
do first thing.

All good wishes to you & Susan

Yrs - Nick

Nick Kepros
77 Washington Place
NY NY 10011

(BODS Y TH)

NICK
KEPROS -6

April 20, 1990

Dear Nick,

Your beautiful letter about The Gods of The Theatre meant a lot more to me than this long delay in answering it would suggest. (Some writing problems I've been having the past few months seem to extend even to letter-writing.) Both the nice things you say, and the useful criticisms you make, are valuable to me--the more so since I think no one (except possibly me!) has ever struggled so long and hard with my writing as you have. Exactly the difficulties you foresaw, and exactly the kind of rewriting you recommended took place during work on a staged reading of the play at Cocteau Rep a few years back.

Also belatedly, I'd like to give you my reaction to the 2 Pinget plays. The Architruc production was wonderfully fluid, open and detailed at the same time. I felt you, as director, using your own actor's resources to make the script "enterable" by actors. Abel and Bela, it seems to me, presents a real dilemma for director and cast: it's neither uncompromisingly abstract (i.e., an exchange of disembodied voices, like some of Pinget's later scripts) nor satisfyingly concrete, like Architruc. It's a compromise between these extremes, and so is a production of it likely to be. At any rate, I felt some such tension on your and your actors' part here.

I'm glad to have been introduced to your work as a director. It's something you're good at (this does not surprise me); and I hope your acting schedule is leaving you time to do more of it. Please let Susan and me know of any coming productions; we're in New York most weekends.

Best,

David Cole
137 Cottage St.
New Haven, Conn. 06511

phone: in NEW HAVEN 203-624-3982
in NEW YORK 212-989-1648

P.S. I'm enclosing a stamped envelope for you to mail back the script in case you've still got it around.

NICK
KEPROS

- 7

Sept 10, 1980

Dear David,

As you see, I'm just getting ^{around} to copying my brief notes.

First, be warned that they are not particularly involved with "content" as your subject is not in my ken and I don't have much of a brain anyway for philosophical considerations. So what you're getting are responses as to practicality, staging, believability, etc., plus a few immediate reflex thoughts. Sometimes they are just idle questions which my curiosity would like answered, even outside the play (such as the following question):

1. does a Rabbi engaged in responses ~~x~~ do nothing but that, or does he have other rabbinical duties as well, or does it vary?
2. in practice, the volume of scrolls needed to make the courier stagger with their weight would have to be ~~xx~~ ridiculously large, and certainly too many for the subsequent business of reading each one before the next batch arrives.
3. the Rabbi's hand ought to get a rest. actually, it should be at rest more often than in motion. Otherwise the hand becomes a distraction and would tend to get in the way of our "seeing" what is being said.
3. the time necessary for the scribe to finish writing a response, roll up the scroll, put it in ~~pp~~ pouch, open up a new scroll, etc., constitutes a stage wait each time. How do you intend to get around that? (this and other comments would be rendered invalid, or made less pertinent, by a TV performance, where cutting truncates natural time flow) On stage, I suggest extra-curricular comments from Rabbi as he waits for next question. The scribe eventually gives up scribbling, but not soon enough to invalidate this problem.
4. "voice at which silence falls", love "crashing in out of the blue" ~~x~~ there are images, words, ideas that recur like a musical motif in this play, and I find that very satisfying.
5. It is nothing short of ingenious to have a Möbius strip hold a question that revolves upon itself. How does your mind ever come up with those connections?
6. I think I must have liked "woven through with departures" I just wrote it down, with no comment, so don't know now if I meant something more.
7. p. 14. I would've given up writing long before the scribe *does*.
8. When the next scroll proceeds directly from the last response of the rabbi, is the scribe "faking" the contents of the next scroll? Or are we now in a surrealist mode in which such things occur? (You'll tell me we were there all along!)

- 9. p.15. what a beautiful description of the clot of overlaid considerations in a problem, and resultant bewilderment.
- 10. You remind me of Christopher Fry with "mesh of starfall" and "alleys that had given up all thought..." and I don't think that's at all bad. New coinages, when they proceed from a high intelligence, are thrilling, and I love it when a thought is the result of the action of words.
- 11. I'd like you to tell me the paradox of the floating tower. That's another hole in my education.
- 12. Mischievous humor. will it be recognized? (Babylon to H. St.)
- 13. p.21 the corporeal aspect of sound; a landscape one moves in, and then incorporates. Wow.

These notes, skimpy as they are, would make more sense if I had had the play before me as I copied them over. Sometimes I have just copied, without remembering exactly. However, I hope something here is useful, if only the encouragement of my enjoying the play.

I'd certainly like to see it done. Michael Lessac returns from L.A. next week, and I return from S.L.C. the following Sunday, the 21st. In the week of 21-28 we should talk, I having determined Lessac's reaction first. I have a feeling he'll be interested, providing he doesn't find the plays Jewishness a limiting factor, especially for T.V. I think the absurdist (sorry, but it seemed Ionesco-like to me; I hope that doesn't disturb you) ending will be fascinating to create with all the means at one's TV disposal.

I hope your meeting with Miss Rosten was fruitful.

Yours,

Nick