

Commentary And Perspective



Editorial

by Cortlandt Jones

Certified Instructors

In Baltimore, Maryland there is a fight brewing among the dance instructors. This is because of the State Senate's intervention in the certification of dance instructors.

The State Senate wants to set up an organization to examine dance instructors annually. If the examination is passed and a fee of \$100 is paid, the instructor will receive a certificate to signify that he is well qualified enough to teach the subject in the State of Maryland. The board of examiners will consist of three local instructors who will alternate their positions with three others annually.

Is this proposed move by the Maryland Senate a good one? The director of the Maryland Ballet Company, Danny Diamond, has answered no. He is trying to oppose this action. His opposition is centered around the teacher, especially in the inner city, who has had little or no training but is doing a creditable service for the underprivileged by exposing them to the art of dance.

The question remains how best to exert a control over quality of instruction that will protect the public. Like the warning of wearing seat belts whenever

driving in case that one accident might happen, licensing for dancing instructors might prevent that one accident to a potential dancer. This gifted person could be ruined for the dancing world all because of the well intentioned but untrained instructor.

In England, the untrained instructor is not so much a problem as in the United States. The Royal Academy of Dancing, whose headquarters is in London, has a teachers training course. This course, which takes three years to complete, certifies the graduate a being well versed and trained as an instructor. The graduate receives an associate diploma, ARAD (associate of the Royal Academy of Dancing).

Maybe something on the order of the Royal Academy would be a solution to the problem. Whatever the solution, I hope it upgrades dance instruction to a level where alarm is not needed. To summarize, this venture by the Maryland Senate is a good though and should be investigated to the fullest degree not only for a state gain but for an artistic gain which could be felt from coast to coast.

Notice: The N.C. Essay will present its first annual Spring Literary Issue shortly. Publication is tentatively set for Monday, May 3rd. It will (hopefully) include poems, short-stories, essays, whatever your creative little hearts fancy. Robin Kaplan is going to edit this special issue, so you can start giving her material you'd like to have considered for inclusion. We're also in-

terested in any art work or photographs that you might want to submit. If possible, we're going to make this an eight-page issue, a kind of idyllic escape from the everyday, run-of-the-mill type we've been putting out. Start thinking about and get the material in quickly so we can see what we have. Deadline for receiving material will be April 27th. So . . . get it on!

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Retrospective

Baez

by David Marshall

Joan Baez: The First Ten Years (Vanguard Records)

A "greatest hits" album always depresses me: if an artist can't come up with anything new to say, then don't rehash. Baez didn't stop for a breather after ten years and look back, Vanguard did, in an effort to cull new money from old tapes. But perhaps the time is right, after all; I certainly didn't realize that it had been ten years. What was the original attraction of Joan Baez? What is the attraction now, if there is one?

I was eleven years old when Joan stepped on that stage at Newport for the first time, and I suppose I was always aware of her, but it took a long time to tune into her peculiar talents. As an early Judy Collins fan, I refused to take Baez seriously — she was the epitome of the good diction-school of folk singing, and that fast vibrato drove me up the wall. I began to warm up to her in 1967, but it took Woodstock to convert me. As a late bloomer, I missed the fanaticism of the early followers, and I'm glad. Maybe the fan bit was fun — it certainly can be — but having missed it, I can see Baez more clearly than Collins, sans nostalgia, and perhaps pin down what, for me, remains unsatisfying about her.

The dissatisfaction is not with her voice — if one can accept the throb, it is a gorgeous instrument, and she handles it superbly. I suppose the famous "achingly pure soprano" description is the most apt, and she can achieve amazing clarity. Rather, I think it is in her presentation of each song that something is missing. She is often bland, lacking that sense of theatre that distinguishes Collins (from *In My Life On*). There is a tendency for each song to sound the same, particularly on *Any Day Now*; she reduces them to a lowest denominator. Although I would not be as harsh as Andrew Sarris, who said in his review of the Dylan documentary *Don't Look Back* that "She (Baez) takes the string out of everything she sings with her very professional charm to the point that she could make 'La Marseillaise' sound like 'My Love Is Like a Cherry,'" I do feel a lack of involvement, a paucity of imagination which prevents any real excitement. She can imitate styles very successfully, as in her occasional Spanish songs or in her Carter Family numbers, but when left on her own she seems unsure of what to do, falling back on clear delivery and "fresh" tone instead of seeking a style of her own for the individual song (a technique not dissimilar to that of Julie Andrews). This "let the song speak for itself" approach works well at times, as on "Song for David," but is not most of the effect of this song dependant upon knowing who David Harris is, rather than on Joan's performance of it? I frequently get a feeling of indication with Baez, as opposed to a full emotional involvement with each number; as a result, she can often go in one ear and out the other. There is a curious lack of texture in a large portion of her work, and because of this she remains, in the long run, unsatisfying.

Yet she was (and is, I suppose) "Queen Joan." Perhaps her achievement was her homogenized quality: she summed up the entire folk movement, in a way, bringing together its many diverse elements with compelling unity into a smooth style. The First Ten

Calley, Manson

"Justice" Prevails

by mjf

delight, but only more horror.

I was relieved to learn that Calley had not received a death sentence. Capital punishment is not the way to deal with our criminals, no matter how savage their crimes may seem. It is a sick and barbaric practice and should be abolished. The dignity of life is further insulted everytime it happens.

Nor do I believe that Calley should go free. The facts indicate that he may be taking the rap for people higher up — they should be tried too. But apparently, Calley was involved in the tragedy at My Lai. That fact, in itself, is inexcusable. Yes, he may be a victim, an unfortunate, but the facts still say that he did it and therefore he cannot simply walk away a free man.

Not if Charles Manson is going to choke to death some day.

WE DO NOT HAVE THE RIGHT TO TAKE ANOTHER PERSON'S LIFE. IF WE KILL, WE ARE NO BETTER THAN THE KILLER. MURDER DOES NOT AVENGE OR SOLVE MURDER.

"What do we do then?" you have every right to ask.

Rehabilitation

Manson, on the other hand, has come to symbolize what has gone wrong in America. He is presented as a pathetic, disgusting figure whose very name spells hatred. As the prototype hippie, Manson has become the real enemy to the American people and they're going to kill him to prove it. A lot of people can't wait to see Charlie Manson fried.

Something is wrong here. These two men, despite their differences and contrasting motives, savagely killed other human beings. One of these men is going to the gas chamber. The other is now "free."

I do not, by any means, condone or dig what Charles Manson allegedly did or ordered to be done. If his involvement in the Sharon Tate murders is as the courts say, then Manson should be punished. But he should not be killed. That solves nothing. It is "an eye for an eye" and God knows we should be past that. Manson's death won't bring back Sharon Tate; it won't prevent the same thing from ever happening again. And in the end, it will give those who so desperately want to see it happen no satisfaction, no

"The Public Messiah"
by Robin Kaplan

I went to a doctor this morning, Jenny went on. I got the form ... and these pills. The first day you feel all muscle, then...then the muscles of the chest start to loosen...then the muscles of the brain start to loosen... You couldn't care less... and when you've lived as I ... when I used to worry: Where is he going tomorrow? Why isn't he here now? But I'm getting away from the whole mess of you.

I'm sticking to purple hearts, said Dardin.

They're no good. These pills cost eight dollars and you get six of them at a time on prescription. I'm walking on air, said Jenny, taking a bottle of pills from her

Years is an excellent sampling of that style, and I recommend it highly. If you own no Baez it belongs in your collection, if only for historical reasons. Rock music is the most interesting music of our time, perhaps the only interesting music; folk music is an important part of its current state and Joan Baez is an important part of American folk.

handbag. They have this inside to keep the pills dry. I said to the doctor: just give me something to make me high. I'm so depressed; I'm hitting the bottom. I could kill you. I could kill everything. I'm in a terrible state.

Yes, said Dardin.

The nurse came over.

Well, said Jenny, what's wrong with him?

He was brought in by the police with no clothes on, said the nurse. Apparently he had been running around Washington Park with no clothes on. I've been told he had a spear in his hand and was saying that he was the last of the Mohicans.

What's wrong with that? asked Jenny. Does that mean he's a psychopath?

Well, said the nurse, a sociopath.

Is that some kind of rebel? Jenny asked.

He's also suffering from what the doctors termed as an arbitrary discharge from the speech center, said the nurse.

Continued on Page 4