

LETTERS

or my pride in having worked with you on *Futz* . . .

*Edward Payson Call
Guthrie Theatre
Minneapolis, Minnesota*

FORD, ROCKEFELLER, AND THEATRE

The Editors:

I have just finished reading Richard Schechner's article, "Ford, Rockefeller, and Theatre" in the fall 1965 issue of TDR. I have rarely read an article which has hit the bull's eye so beautifully, so completely, and with such documentation and facts to buttress its conclusions.

*Hy Faine
National Executive Secretary
American Guild of Musical Artists
New York*

The Editors:

Congratulations on the unusually incisive article—"Ford, Rockefeller, and Theatre." I, too, have observed Arena Stage's development here and have never quite been able to define the somewhat dull feelings one has after attending a number of performances. Of course some productions are excellent and exciting. But by and large there seems to be a lethargy, which may indeed tie in closely with your theory of the need for audience diversity. Arena has been forced to watch box office receipts closely, which may account for many complaints about failure to experiment and innovate, failure to give local talent more opportunities, etc. But as you have implied—what after 100% box office success? Will there then be



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Tulane Drama Review

a turn toward more innovation, more efforts to build a multi-class audience. Hopefully, yes. And what about the gradual alienation of indigenous talent, I see here—people trapped within their professions having opportunities only in amateur theatre? I fear this singularity of taste is being fostered by an attitude among some foundation people that *one* repertory company is adequate in a community. Such a theory seems to preclude the possibility of more professional theatre even more than does the tendency to expect a theatre group to be financially successful before a grant is made.

*J. Richard Taft
Editor,
Foundation News
Washington, D. C.*

The Editors:

A comment on "Ford, Rockefeller, and Theatre."

While I am in accord with Professor Schechner's suspicions of incompatibility between various foundation grants and theatre, I am rather surprised that in his very next breath he proposes a program which invites its own suspicions.

The artist's relationship to society is always characterized by an unmitigable ambiguity. I believe it was Edmund Wilson who likened this ambiguity to the story of Philoctetes, the Greek warrior, who was shunned by his countrymen because of the offensive odor of a suppurating wound; yet, Philoctetes was a brilliant archer and was sought out by his countrymen because they needed his unerring skill with the bow. Any overture of philanthropy to art provokes our critical vigilance because it is so easy for the