

Our staff are in trouble

Forthright articles by our own staff writers on Amateur Dramatics and Bebop have brought some hard-hitting replies.

But we can take it. Let's go.

SIR.—I agree with the first paragraph of Mr. Ken. Warren's article "Jealousy," but how wrong he is subsequently!

For a number of years I was connected with several dramatic societies, mostly in Surrey. In none of them did I meet the queer people "each society possesses" (according to Mr. Warren).

I should like to present him to Teddy—a fine young character actor, and capable producer. He was always helpful, knew his job, but was never that most loathsome thing, conceited.

He should meet Mr. Collar, and his wife, who possessed one of the most beautiful voices I have ever heard: Jimmy, Don (our accomplished stage manager), Jeannie, Harvey, Henry, oh, so many of them. I nearly forgot Mr. Mutton, of Cornwall. Maybe his name would cause Mr. Warren some sardonic laughter. He would be a privileged young man to meet this grand person, in the lovely village he calls home.

Mr. Warren says he is jaded. Surely not! He sounds much too young and immature. I should say "jaundiced!"

Congratulations on your grand little paper. It's one of the best locals I have known, even including (let me whisper) those of Surrey and Cornwall.

DORIS LEEDS

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Chelmsford.

SIR.—May I, as one associated with amateur theatrical productions for many years, be allowed space for a few comments?

In his Tuesday article Mr. Warren embarks on many journeys but does not appear to arrive at a destination from any of them. Perhaps as both critic and performer he has a "round ticket."

It is agreed that a theatre is greatly needed in Chelmsford although, if Ken. Warren is to be believed, there would be a queue of societies seeking its use. How many of such productions would fill such a theatre or be worthy of it is a matter for consideration.

When speaking of the effect of "Atlee's Axe" on capital expenditure, it is relevant to ask whether the Municipal Authorities are doing all, or indeed any part of, that which they are empowered to do under those Sections of the Act dealing with the provision of Municipal Entertainment. It is all very well to give lip service to an ideal but the powers are there if they are invoked.

Few persons connected with amateur entertainment appear to have escaped the axe wielded with such youthful exuberance by Mr. Warren and it seems that the article should be taken in the nature of a warning to would-be participants to keep away from such "types."

Can we not be a little more tolerant and charitable and agree that all these people are doing a worthwhile job in bringing interest and definite pleasure to themselves and their patrons? Who is to decide where "healthy competition" ends and "jealousy" begins?

It is a fact that once a cast has been decided, the team spirit in most amateur productions is admirable. It is a great pity if Mr. Warren has found it otherwise, and it is to be hoped that he himself does not fall into one of his own categories.

Mr. Warren seems to have omitted one type from his list and that is the performer who, having accepted a prominent part in a production, proceeds to "patronise"

it and presumably attempts to "damn it" in the minds of the public before its presentation. This seems to be nothing less than downright disloyalty to his Society; surely a major crime.

"Virginia" (1929 vintage) is certainly no "dustier" than any of the other musical productions staged by the Chelmsford Amateur Operatic & Dramatic Society; in fact, the best musical shows available to amateurs are "dusty" if, by that term, Mr. Warren means past their first youth.

Leaving out the American importations, there have been very few worth while "musicals" in recent years. "Virginia" can be a grand show and it is to be hoped that all those taking part in it appreciate the fact.

Incidentally, if Mr. Warren takes a look at all those empty seats at the Regent Theatre he will find that very few of them are "red plush." Perhaps his observation has been equally at fault in other directions.

BERT BARNEVELD

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Chelmsford.

Concords and Discords

SIR.—I have just read the article on Bebop in the *Newsman-Herald*. Being a young professional musician I felt that I must make some attempt to counteract the false impressions which your article will have given many readers.

It seems fairly obvious that Miss Janice Farmer is completely at sea where Bebop is concerned. To begin with the word "Bebop" has nothing to do with dancing whatsoever.

It is a term used by American saxophonist Charlie Parker and his fellow musicians to describe their experimental jazz. A Jazz in which a metronomic beat is often left out, in which new harmonic constructions are employed.

A Jazz, in fact, which empates from the brain, a cold technical collection of concords and discords, the whole a description of something. I should very much like to see anyone dance to pure Bebop.

The words "Square" and "Hep" which Miss Farmer associates with "Bebop" are, in fact, two of the oldest words in the Jazz language; and while they can be used in conjunction with Bebop, they do not apply to it alone, as the article would suggest.

In the last paragraph, Miss Farmer states herself to be old-fashioned. Could I remind her that Bebop in England is four years' old, while the Samba as a ballroom dance is only three years' old.

In conclusion I should like to say that I have made a close study of Bebop since its conception, and if Miss Farmer would like putting on the right track I am always available on Saturday nights at the Casino.*

B. S. HARRIS

Drummer, Arthur Rosebery's
Casino Players

London Road
Chelmsford.

* Miss Farmer assures us she is still out of breath from the last lot.—EDITOR.

SIR.—Miss Janice Farmer seems to have the wrong idea on this new form of rhythm music.

"Bop" is essentially a modern music, not as Miss Farmer described it, "a dance to do as much damage as possible to one's person and clothes." Neither is it a method of "ruining popular tunes."

Musically speaking, Bop is very interesting and requires a high degree of musical skill to play.

True, the music does inspire the dancers, but the dancers do not necessarily inspire the musician.

May I suggest that Miss Farmer pays a visit to a session at the Chelmsford & Mid-Essex Rhythm Club, where "Bop" (and all types of rhythm music) is played to a seated audience.*

These sessions allow for maximum concentration on the music, there being no distraction caused by the mad antics of some dancers.

MAURICE ROWLEY

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* Miss Farmer gratefully acknowledges the invitation.