

Can colour be taken seriously?

When Bryan Forbes first ran through the rough cut of The whole film implies that it is the gional broadcasting, the B.B.C.'s Whisperers his cameraman re- "right" solution to their probmarked to him: "Watch this lem, indeed the necessary step to closely. It may be the last black- preserve their love as an unspoilt ' and-white feature ever made in myth. So hardly a shadow Britain." As it happens it was not crosses the scene, literally or meta-(after a lot of argument with pos- phorically, from beginning to end. sible distributors, Inadmissible far from being the norm, is a as yet by no means the norm. at once the possibility of a profitable eventual sale to colour television, the guarantee of which is often all that promises to balance a film maker's books.

side, the passage of time has ren- not the application of precisely dered them almost as obsolete as the same glossy-magazine colour | 7 arguments about whether the photography to carnage in talkie was here to stay. It is hardly Vietnam, horse-riding in Central any use any more bewailing the Park and winter sports in fact that "black-and-white sub- Switzerland become positively | jects" have to be made in colour. distasteful and insulting? Instead, we would do better to Yes, it does. But not I think ter-of-factly there.

dent are some sort of freak.

NEW RECORDS

Great Handel and lesser Mozart

Two important new sets of eighteenth-century music dramas have just been issued by R.C.A.; one of a great work, the other of a lesser one. And as so often happens, it is the lesser piece that comes off the better. It is Mozart's opera (or "pastoral serenade"), Il rè pastore. He composed it in 1775, to a libretto by Metastasio-rather a static and undramatic libretto, but (of course) it obeys the rules and provides opportunities for the characters to 'sing arias in a variety of moods. "There is nothing", wrote Einstein, "for Mozart to do but write beautiful music." And, of course, he did. It may be conventional music, but it is polished, graceful, inventive: a constant joy to listen

to, if not often a thrill. The performance under Denis Vaughan is as persuasive of its beauties as any could be. For one thing, Mr. Vaughan really knows about Mozartian style: the appoggiaturas are grammatically Handel. The conductor is Brian | garde in jazz represents among inserted, and he has a sure feel- Priestman, several of whose tempi other things a determined attempt ing for tempo and for texture. seem oddly hasty—I often feel to break away from Charlie Both tenors, Luigi Alva (Alexan- that he has not quite come to Parker's der the Great) and Nicola Monti terms with the character of the | Woods's alto playing is a personal (Agenore), are extremely accom- music, or has not succeeded in distillation of Parker's spirit—the plished and phrase their music conveying it to forces not really with grace and fluency. Arlene at home in the style. Saunders makes a pleasantly soft, feminine Tamiri, and Lucia Popp sings with purity and sweetness in all Elisa's music—much of which lies high and is very testing. Reri Grist in the title role is firm and clear, sometimes a trifle shrill, and she phrases the famous aria "L'amerò, saro costante" warmly. A thoroughly enjoyable set (RE/SER 5567-8).

Handel's Hercules is on an altogether larger scale: it has been public galleries should be open all of baroque music drama. I personally distrust these comparative value judgments, for although it is certainly a masterpiece it emerges a shade patchy as a totality—as Handel's big works were bound to, considering their social and aesthetic context. But the good patches in Hercules are superb in- policy he hopes will be generally

the question again. Vivre pour THEATRE Vivre and Elvira Madigan. Both are in colour, both have at least serious aspirations. In both, as it happens, the colour is particu-

larly attractive in itself. Elvira Madigan is an idyllic love story ending in the death of the lovers. Just to look at, it is one of the most beautiful films I have ever seen. But then, it is not supposed to be destructive for idylls to be sensuously beautiful—rather the Permissive reverse. If the accent were placed on the tragedy of the lovers' death 1000 the colour might be taken as distracting. But the death is not really tragic at all, in that the In the prewar golden age of re-

Serious or not, it is a film which Evidence has also been made in would imperatively demand to be black-and-white). But it could made in colour, even in a country have been. Now black-and-white, such as Sweden, where colour is luxury few can afford, and then Vivre pour Vivre is a very only, as with In Cold Blood, with different matter. It is tempting to a lot of to-do. Mainly, it cuts out say right off that the very attractiveness of its colour is an obstacle in the way of whatever serious it is trying to say. How can we believe that these people, for the next hack job to feed the Hamlet, both edited to reflect anyone, and the New York School who appear to have stepped family, asked Kyd if he could their own societies. One, which Board were quite right to tour it. concerned with the Prince and So the arguments about subjects straight out of a colour supplesuitable for colour, and what did ment, can have real problems, and did not justify the use of bleed real blood, go through their colour, all fall rather by the way- own dark night of the soul? Does

consider what accommodations just because the film is made in are required to the new situation colour. Imagine the same script in which virtually every English- made in the same way in blacklanguage film will willy-nilly be and-white. The characterization made in colour—colour deliber- would still be as shallow, the ately "used", or colour just mat-flirtation with "problems" like Congo mercenaries and war in The notion, of course, has Vietnam quite as offensive, simply | \{\varpsilon} always been that colour in the because they are used merely to cinema must necessarily glamor- deck out a cheap and novelettish ize, prettify. All right for musicals story with the trappings of signifiand lush travelogues, but a sad im- cance. In Un Homme et une pediment to serious film-making Femme Lelouch gave us a novel-But is this so, or is it largely a ette unashamed, and the effect matter of association, deriving was delightful. Here he has disfrom the days when to film in covered shame, and lost his colour was itself to depart from touch. The colour, the visual the norm? We do not, after all, glamour, really have very little complain because a production of to do with the films failure, King Lear on stage must be in though I suppose they are destined colour, and the parallel, even to add another leaf to the dossier counting the cinema's greater pos- of the anti-colour party. Of course sibilities for manipulation of colour like any other resource colour, is not so misleading. And of the film-maker can be rightly yet the idea persists that Bonnie or wrongly used or just non-comand Clyde may be that much less mittally present, as in life. Perserious for being in colour, or haps M. Lelouch thought that in that evidently serious, subdued using it here he was coating a colour films like Muriel and Acci- bitter pill with sugar. Unfortunately he failed to notice that the Two of this week's films raise pill itself was only saccharine.

> deed, and are often long sustained. The work's greatness lies not

only in the fine quality of most of its music but also in its integrity ' and its depth of characterization: the bluff, self-important Hercules, the innocently virginal but gradually warming Iole, the intense, bitterly jealous Dejanira. Casting for character is allimportant, and in that the new set (RE/SER 5569-71) disappoints. Louis Quilico makes a decent, respectable Hercules, without much personality, sometimes eccentric in pronunciation. Maureen Forrester's Dejanira, similarly, is ' adequately sung (if with rather plummy tone) but hardly begins to suggest a woman torn by jealous passion. She gives an acceptable account of the mad scene, but by then it is too late; the character cannot be believed in: And Teresa ' Stitch-Randall's hard tone and often uncontrolled line make her inapt for the gentle Iole—her beautiful last aria, "My breast with tender pity swells", is sung with an inexplicable expressive blandness. The only singer to give much pleasure is Alexander Young as Hyllus; none of the smaller parts is done with any

The Vienna Academy Chorus sings with a competent profes-' sionalism and an Austrian accent: like the Vienna Radio Orchestra, there is some lack of the vitality and directness that are needed in |

Commenting on the change, the

Pope-Hennessy, remarked on the

need—for visitors to London

especially—to have such oppor-

tunity of making the best of their

time. It is a first step towards a

Sunday morning at the V and A

The Victoria and Albert Museum adopted. Sunday-morning opening

will, from tomorrow, be the first is the general rule in France. Ger-

museum in Great Britain to be many, Austria. and Italy. The

mornings. Miss Jennie Lee, whose the Museums Association and



Manchester studio put out a play called Crowner's Quest which gave my introduction to Shakespeare. Apparently the man was a writer, but his real gift to posterity lay in criminal detection. Raising his eyes to a greasy window after lowe to the jealous Thomas Kyd. I can't remember the details. But I remember one early exchange where Shakespeare, looking about

thinking to see his royalties from Charles Marowitz's Hamlet Col-The Spanish Tragedy, as well as lage, first seen in 1965 at the his liberty, cut off by the author Berlin Literarisches Colloquium, of Hamlet, who, as I now recol- and now published with a 40-page lect, used a variant of the play introduction (Allen Lane, The scene to snare the real murderer. Penguin Press, 21s.).

When Crowner's Quest came out it was usual to regard Shake- minutes, but generally retained the speare as a bluff professional whose work was as sacred as the jecting any amount of free diatablets of Moses. We now regard logue and imagery. Marowitz to chop his work about. The butchery of the eighteenth-century adding any non-Shakespearian high on some illicit preparation or Marowitz's way of looking at improvers is nothing compared with the treatment handed out by writers and directors in the past few years.

I don't think anything is to be gained by high-toned discussion of what is permissible and what is not. If general principles are to be found, they will emerge only from an examination of indivigrinding out the last lines of Titus dual cases: and if Shakespearian Andronicus he stumbled on the reworkings so far have failed to momentous significance of finger- produce masterpieces, they have prints; and thus managed to trace certainly kept up the pursuit of youd that point they diverge. the murder of carefree Kit Mar- crime and evil in the modern

'have a go at that thing of yours I wrote about from New York. Marowitz needs a sophisticated with the ghost in it?". Kyd gave is Joseph Papp's version at the audience as his effects depend on his consent with a sneer, little Public Theatre. The other is the ability to cross-relate the

> Papp cut the playing time to 90 original order of events while inentirely reshuffle the events and redistributes the speeches without pared on the assumption that the better revealed by dislocating its formal mechanism: partly because audience response is dulled by over-familiarity with the narrative, but even more because five-act linear continuity no longer corresponds to the discontinuity and simultaneous actions of everyday life. So far, Papp and Marowitz seem to be in agreement; but be-

The differences are partly technical. Papp's version, for all its The obvious case is Barbara Puerto Rican gags at the grave-Garson's McBird. Less familiar side and Tonton Macoute bodyare two cut-up versions of guards, could be followed by

original text to the way in which it has been twisted. But, as can be seen, that technical difference

implies something more. is the drop-out Prince, evidently lessly sycophantic Horatio. dialogue. Both versions were pre- other, but ardently wooing the the play combines Bradleian house, and still capable in the last criticism with Method acting: relevance of the play could be resort of heroic action. Beneath the experimental superstructure one discerns the old pair of American imperatives: Be successful; Be lovable.

> Marowitz, too, is American; pragmatism in the Collage. And one reason, I think, that we have ignored a work that has played in and execution another. And the 25 countries is that it is centrally

entirely free from the spell which he traditionally imposes.

Briefly, Marowitz sees Hamlet as a man incapable of real action, and compensating by means of substitute activities like play-acting (the grave scene and the duel) and Papp's Hamlet, like so much of substitute targets (Ophelia instead the off-Broadway theatre, shows of Gertrude). He picks the the democratic instinct fighting glamorously distant Fortinbras as for survival in an anti-human a model because the immediate environment. The savage lighting, comparison with Laertes is too unthe scaffold setting, the mon- comfortable; and his indulgence in strously uniformed authorities are masochism and fantasy are all nakedly hostile; in their midst throughout sustained by the spine-

characters have real biographies which can be pursued beyond the boundaries of the text. Perhaps Claudius has slept with Ophelia. Probably the elder Hamlet ran the country on the rocks. Had he and to judge from his introduction lived, Hamlet would have out-"I despise Hamlet. He is a classed Polonius as a senile bore. slob") he suggests the New York In critical terms I find this hard spectator who couldn't understand to take, especially when Marowitz why an educated fellow like Jimmy switches tracks half way through, Porter in Look Back in Anger and instead of judging the Prince didn't get himself a good job. How- against a real society, claims that ever, there is more than American the society is entirely a projection of the hero's fantasy.

> However, theory is one thing Collage itself makes powerful theatrical sense. It takes place in

a limbo accommodating 10 planes of experience, and one of its main strengths is the ability to establish say, a schoolroom, or a trial court as firm oases in a fluid action. It is a work of great speed and dexterity with a solidly thoughtout subtext. There is nothing accidental about the ironies; and their force can be gauged from this exchange between Hamlet and Fortinbras, his accusing super-

Fortinbras: (taking him by the shoulders)

What would you undertake To show yourself your father's

son in deed More than in words?

Hamlet: (squirming) I'll . . . observe his looks; I'll

... tempt him to the quick, I'll have grounds more relative

than this.

For me this approach does more to recapture the original impact of the text than any revival I have seen for years. Perhaps the impact is misdirected. But if we are to have a portrait of Hamlet as the narcissistic Western liberal, flirting with commitment and holding forth at Vietnam coffee

mornings, this is the way to do it.



Michael

Billington

TELEVISION

will the

Two weeks ago in Panorama's admirable film report on censorship, there was an extract from a Danish television play in which two seaside bathers indulged in a little gentle love-making on a deserted beach. To protect the British viewing public, the scene was suddenly cut at the point where the girl discarded the tophalf of her bikini: the original version was, apparently, a shade more explicit. But, of course, because of the cut (made, I am told, at the instructions of a senior programme official) the whole episode gained a great deal in lubricous suggestiveness.

This episode, and indeed the whole programme, prompted one

four-square and weakly drama-

tized, and one felt that Mr.

Barlow knew this symphony

markedly less well than Mozart's

Haffner, of which he gave a lively,

authoritative performance later in

the evening. He conducted both

The three short works which

divided these masterpieces were

something of a miscellany, albeit

of high quality. Dvorak's lovely

violin Romance, op. 11, a piece

which urges one to explore the

early F minor quartet from which

t was arranged, was given a

shapely and accomplished per-

formance by Nona Liddell, though

Mr. Barlow's brusque account of

Delius's On hearing the first

cuckoo showed little sympathy

for this particular idiom. Adrian

without a score.

vision with other media not least because of the different viewing conditions. I should have thought, however, that the mere fact that television is watched in domestic surroundings, is bound to make it less adventurous in many respects than either the theatre or the

"Girl Reading" and (left) "Trafalgar Tavern, Greenwich (1878)"—two works in the James Tissot retrospective

Nevertheless, when one surveys television over the past few years, one comes across some strange contradictions. On the one hand, there are signs of much greater permissiveness: politicians can be lampooned without the heavens falling in, swear words can be liberally employed if the context demands it, and even people's sexual habits can be discussed with comparative freedom. On the other hand, there are also plenty tional politician to be a lying, of signs of timerous pussy-footing. swindling, vicious adulterer who The most laughable of these came hated animals and small children? the other day when the I.T.A. got Do the B.B.C. and the I.T.A. cold feet over the title of the new seriously imagine that the voters drama series, Virgin of the Secret would be influenced by what Service, and asked for the hero's they'd seen and believe that all name to be changed to Vergen. candidates of Mr. X's party were Much less laughable was the like that? trouble an I.T.V. producer ran into some years ago when he tried to set up a programme on erotic art and found all sorts of barriers being erected.

It is tempting (but misleading) to see the B.B.C. as progressive and pioneering and the I.T.A. as Mrs. Grundys of this world are cowardly and conservative. In anything but an unfortunate, one respect, at least, they are handicapped minority who deserve similarly culpable. anyone tries to write a play about but one day, if we're very good, politics, both groups seem to go the B.B.C. might even assume into a nervous tizzy in case they we're sufficiently mature to watch are accused of partiality. Of The War Game?

to consider just how much free- course, in the context of a latedom British television actually en- night show it is possible (and joys. Do some programmes al- rightly possible) to attack the ready go beyond the bounds of policies, principles and even what most viewers consider per- motives of politicians without missible? Or is television, as a having to worry about "balance". medium, much more restricted in But a play about politics is what it can show and discuss than another matter. Do you rememthe theatre and the cinema? Im- ber the fuss many years ago about mediately one asks the questions Val Gielgud's Party Manners? one runs into problems. In the And more recently there have first place, no one ever knows just been delays and difficulties over how much the public will take un- a political play of John Bowen's, til a programme has actually gone over two episodes of The Power out or just how representative the Game and over Dennis Potter's people who ring up afterwards to Vote, Vote, Vote for Nigel protest actually are. Secondly, it Barton. In his introduction to the is always difficult to compare tele- Penguin edition of the play, Mr. Potter recalls how the work was withdrawn seven hours before it was due to go out on the air, how he was asked by a chief executive at the B.B.C. if he was "some kind of fascist" and how re-writes were demanded that the author considers disfigured his play.

> The mistake, of course, lies in treating political drama as if it were a by-product of current affairs and should therefore be fair, balanced and totally impartial: there is not the least reason why a play should be any of these things. The other error lies in over-estimating the power of a work of art to transform people's actions and opinions. Suppose a play did go out at the time of a by-election showing a totally fic-

One assumes that eventually both the B.B.C. and the I.T.A. will realize that their fears are groundless. In the meantime one hopes that producers will continue to treat us like adults and never fall into the trap of assuming that the Whenever our sympathy. And who knows

> THE TATE GALLERY has the sculpture

THAMES AND HUDSON have the book

determinism. It is a witty, intelligent piece of writing and the students of the nuances. Some of the middle-aged characters are rather colourlessly played but Gareth Hunt, as the

A. M. HAMMACHER

formance and there is good Professor Hammacher writes with rare warmth and perception of support from Joanna David and Barbara Hepworth's personality and her work.'-w. T. OLIVER, Leonard Gregory. A word of Yorkshire Post. 216 pages with 18 colour plates, 155 black and white plates, World of Art Library, clothbound 35s, paperback 21s.

THANES AND HUDSON Write for our catalogue to 30 Bloomsbury Street, London, WC1

A new movement in jazz always tends to eclipse the one immediately before it while at the same time the one before that moves out of the shadows again, which is probably why the New Orleans and mainstream revivals came when they did. In short, being a little behind the times in jazz is a crime, but being a long way be-

hind is something of a blessing. Phil Woods, who will be playing at Ronnie Scott's Club until April 20, is a criminal by these standards. The current avant very fact that he has adhered to Parker's instrument instead of the

STANLEY SADIE I now much more usual tenor saxo-

wish it has long been as Minister the Standing Commission on for the Arts that museums and Museums. A difficulty hitherto has been. Admirers of Dame Flora Rob. In a university lecture hall, 200 hailed not only as his dramatic day on Sundays, will be present that of the extra warders re- son can expect an Easter Monday | years from now, a group of crimi- becomes a putative godhead, gives quired. It is to be met at the treat on Radio 4. That cool, lucid | nals recreate the life led by the for-V. & A. by keeping the pri- voice will be giving its interpreta- | tunate survivors of the Great Rain Director of the V. & A., Mr. John vate collections open all day tion of the Regency's dizziest of 1968. On one level, the play is Sunday and leaving the more dowager, Mrs. Malaprop in Sheri- | an allegory about the way any enspecialized collections closed. dan's The Rivals. Peter Pratt plays | closed society passes through the The primary collections are those the fire-breathing Sir Anthony, stages of democracy, autocracy

WILLIAM GAUNT guish.

public is most likely to wish to

phone suggests the depth of his

Woods is no mere copyist. Charlie Parker's name springs to mind only when one sits down to review him; at Ronnie Scott's Club the overwhelming impression is of a man who still finds enough room the traditions forties and fifties thoroughly and freshly himself. His records have familiarized us with the incisive, sometimes slashing, tone, the magnetism of his swing and the lucidly controlled fervour of his improvising (a relief both from the earlier loquaciousness of bop and the frequently inarticulate intensity of the current avant garde) and he sounds even more impressive in person.

But his unfashionable approach '

should deter no one, because

He shares the bill with Jon Hendricks, who, like all jazz nered conductor, fond of illussingers, faces the problem of having to use songs which do not express the same range of emotion open to instrumentalists. Most other singers pretend the problem is nonexistent and thus sound hypocritical or faintly ludicrous: Hendricks neatly side-steps the question by basing a highly entertaining act on a recipe of humorous dialogue, rhymed recitative, sophisticatedly catchy lyrics of his own composition and headlong blues. It is probably the best solution, but it open to the public on Sunday move has the strong support of is a pity that a better one is not | John Bowen's After the Rain,

MILES KINGTON

containing what the general Bernard Brown his dashing son | and theocracy before it finally desand Christine Finn that eighteenth- troys itself. But, with the crimicentury raver, Miss Lydia Lannals rebelling against the discipline

REVIEWS

The Jacques Orchestra's concert at the Elizabeth Hall last night was of a familiar type: Mozart and Haydn, a couple of short romantic works for small orchestra, and a first London performance to catch the attention, if not the memory. These concerts seldom really take fire, though of its kind this one was not bad, and had the important merit of ending better than it had begun.

Alan Barlow is a somewhat man- Cruft's four-year-old Divertitrating the music with little flicks of his wrist or twists of his body, but not always very convincing in his grasp of structural essence. Haydn's C minor Symphony, No. 95, was a distinctly episodic affair.

imposed by the university lec-

mento for strings proved a cheerful work of elegance and charm, if little individuality. It has already been recorded, a distinction which might without unkindness be described as fortunate.

turer, the play also demonstrates

STEPHEN WALSH

seem appropriate for a university

Webber-Douglas seem alert to its played but Gareth Hunt, as the a thoughtful well-sustained perpraise, too, for Hugh Morrison's light, airy set which has a hygienic ' orderliness and symmetry that

how individual will-power always upsets the laws of historical writing and the students of the

presented this week by students of the Webber-Douglas Academy of Dramatic Art, is a fascinating play. bespectacled accountant who