

BILLY ROWE'S NOTEBOOK

BROADWAY NO BUST

Broadway is universally recognized as the crossroads of the world and not without reason. It attracts millions from the great metropolis which is New York and its teeming environs. It is the magnet which draws millions more from the hinterland of the U.S.A. It is busy, busy, busy. Night and day. It never sleeps. Row on row there are movie houses, legitimate theatres, peep shows. It is theatre and terror. It is neon and neanderthal. It is a place to visit or avoid. It is celebrities and celebrants, drunks and pimps and thieves and pickpockets and some of the best people this side of heaven. It is the most discussed street anywhere. It is praised in song with more people than George M. Cohan giving their "Regards to Broadway". Despite its proven allure, it gets a black eye because this buzzing boulevard is sometimes the locale for murder and mayhem, marauders and meanies lurking in corners and crevices. This comparatively darkened area is at the very gateway to the famed thoroughfare. It's known as 42nd St., only a one block portion of it, from 7th to 8th Aves. It forms the borderline, a frontier outpost leading to Times Square itself, where the action is, where a million screaming celebrants converge on New Year's Eve to blow their tops and ring out the old.

Because this long block houses peep shows and massage parlors and is a hideaway for any other sordid activity City Fathers perennially fulminate against this desecration of Fun City. They say it is a blot on the escutcheon. They would preserve legitimate theatres and movie houses, the cultural center of all New York. But for heavens sake, lets clean up 42nd St! The latest in a series of cleanup plans is a Ford Foundation blueprint to tear down the one block and encase it by glass-enclosed atriums, a latin word for huge ultrafancy courtyards as in the days of ancient Rome. They would have bridges and escalators, swank shops and promenades. They would tear down some movie houses (not all of them) and legit theatres on Broadway itself which, in the opinion of bankers and civic leaders, pollute the atmosphere and stain the minds of the endless boulevardiers.

Forget the geographical perimeters and forgive this madding thought. What would Broadway be like without the squalid surroundings, the moralistic filth? What would New Orleans Basin St. be like or Beale St. in Memphis, if there weren't a hole to peep through? No, we're not advocating that anyone perpetuate sin or beat their mothers. What makes Broadway "Attractive" is not only that scores of theatre marquees are ablaze with a change of movies almost every day, or that most houses feature films unseen throughout the rest of the land until after they've hit Broadway, or that musicals and extravaganzas, the hits and the misses are first ogled here, they come not alone for goodies but for sin itself! What lured people to drink except prohibition itself! What lures crowds except burlesque and tawdry dames parading the street and sleazy flicks advertised side by side with Academy Award winning dramas?

In short, what would 42nd St. be like without 42nd St.. Broadway without Broadway or the ways of its "broads"? Planners beware! All this bears watching People from Peoria and visitors from Oshkosh --- the tourist trade from all over the U.S. is not coming to the Big Apple unless it can walk away from some of the filth to proclaim back home: "New York is a nice place to visit but I wouldn't live there." That, in short is the very attraction of Broadway --- there is no place like it! It's where Gregory Peck alights from a limousine to first-night "Raisin". It's where Butterfly McQueen hops off a bus from her uptown diggins secure in the acclaim she got in "Gone With the Wind." It's where James Earl Jones struts in the crowd which has just witnessed his role as Jack Johnson, the heavyweight champ in the "Great White Hope." It's where Cicely Tyson waves at her fans. It's where Elaine Reed and the Hines Brothers, no relations to the immortal Earl (Fatha) Hines, are seen going backstage nightly to play in "Eubie", one of the musical hits of the season. Where but on Broadway would you see the bigs mingling with the littles?

Oh, you can put a new face on 42nd St., tear down some old buildings, and make it a veritable gateway

with plumed and beribboned guards, marching in unison proclaiming: "All ye who enter here leave all hope behind." Then the public would be forewarned that there are land mines and torpedoes ahead. Betcha the fans wouldn't care as long as they could see Andre DeShields of "Ain't Misbehavin'" enter the theatre nightly.

Maybe Broadway does require some cleaning up but let us not dim the lights which nightly stab the darkness. Let's chase some winos and psychos and put a special alert on for those who would disturb the peace. Lets close up the illicit joints. There should always be a Broadway, here, there, and everywhere...

STAY LOOSE

WHAT YOUR STARS SAY

April 4-10



FOR THE WHOLE SOUL NATION

"Lo this, we have searched (the stars), so it is; hear it, and know thou it is for thy good." (Job: 5:27)

The Sun has crossed the Vernal Equinox. Spring is here. Some of us are feeling ashen and bereft. We will not pinpoint the cause of our sadness because that would only make us sadder. The words: "... and there will be wars and rumors of war..." keep flashing across our mind screen. Many wonder how the American government can charge us so much money seemingly just to breathe, and how callously they inflate the cost of food to the point that it is a luxury to properly nourish the body with good food on a daily basis. Children are not learning in the schools, and their behavior (influenced by television) is coarse and disrespectful although we do try and teach them differently. This culminates into a sense of failing, and black people across the nation are depressed. We see that our struggle for civil rights has not attained us human rights. "We see that nowhere is where we been to..."

All of us—unilaterally and across the world—high class to low class, in whatever sphere our life revolves, regardless of the Stars that shine for us—each is experiencing America's resurgence of racism. And we do not fear the activity of racism because we know what to expect; what we fear is the rage and lack of reconciliation over the problems of race in our own heart. We don't know if our saturated hearts will split open, and if demons of violence will ruff forth and do something silly.

Our alternative is to hasten change by establishing disci-

plines in our daily life—like turning off the TV and having a family night where all you do is talk; by going over to the school and chatting with teachers and principals; by writing the Department of Consumer Affairs—or the President, himself, stating your adamant opinion on the immorality of food prices. In other words, by making known the fact that we need money—not coupons and stamps; that we need high income housing that considers the growth of the family. And last but not least we should revive the habit of prayer, or talking out loud to God, or listening to gospel music while you do Spring cleaning. It takes doing if things are to get done. Saturn in opposition to Pisces—the constellation ruling black people, insists that we acquire individual and collective discipline; that we truly cease being afraid of ourselves and each other—that we LOVE ONE ANOTHER!

ARIES — March 21-April 20

Behold! The thing you have wished for may come to you. Be sure you want what you're wishing for, or you may be stuck with a whim or a farce. Your thinking is creative, your vitality is magnetic, your impulses (like always) need subduing. Be cool and careful!

TAURUS — April 21-May 21

Now while the mass consciousness involves itself in Spring cleaning, you may want to give away land or properties to an institution that serves the growth and development of artistic culture. However, if you've nothing to give but Time and Talent, remember to visit the sick and imprisoned... caring leads to sharing.

GEMINI — May 22-June 21

You have to take especially good care of your nerves. Bad nerves cause absent-

mindedness and this in turn could cause the loss of valuable opportunities. You must also control your inclination to fantasize. Remember: "The journey of a thousand miles begins with the first step."

CANCER — June 22-July 23

It would be a shame if you let compulsive eating ruin your shape and form—to say nothing of the havoc it creates in your stomach. Come out and let go and put down and be unafraid. The angel of Light comes when you call.

LEO — July 24-August 23

Just like the Sun, you must tolerate and endure the passage of dark clouds, realizing that since the universe is perpetual motion and perpetual change, the best is yet to come. Make sure that you're ready to last—way beyond the expectancy of your visible powers.

VIRGO — August 24-September 23

If you've been trying to piece together a shattering romance, now may be the time for you to let go completely. Pain and pleasure cannot occupy the exact same space at the exact same time. To remove yourself from pain shows Love for the Self... and... shall (you) say it was not Love just because it perished?"

LIBRA — September 24-October 23

There is never a need to indulge in bitter argument—even for the sake of Truth and Justice. You are being called upon to yield to all things that don't matter—and this is not a lapse into passivity, but a way towards the creation of alternative solutions.

SCORPIO — October 24-November 22

One cannot exercise power over others unless one has power over oneself. If your desire for power is purely for

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personal and selfish reasons, you may lose the little that you do have. So realize that a hunger for power is symptomatic of a diseased Ego.

SAGITTARIUS—November 23-December 21

You may feel compelled to dramatize the events in your life in order to attract to you necessary attention for aid and progress. This is okay as long as your foundation for the dramatic is composed of real substances like Love, Wisdom and Truth. God is on your side.

CAPRICORN — December 22-January 20

You are much too sensible to put love and romance before ambition and career. But bear in mind that life at the top is exceedingly lonely, and if someone of like mind and like heart comes into your life—take advantage. Friendship and companionship are rare energies in the modern world.

AQUARIUS — January 21-February 19

You feel best when your mind is free of petty and mundane decisions. However, there's a lot for you to study, think about and know. Your favorite question during this period is probably: who am I? To receive a qualified answer, listen to the voice of the silence.

PISCES — February 20-March 20

Your strongest powers never resided in your ability to reason on the intellectual level, so don't strain your brain to make sense out of the absurd reasoning that goes on in today's society. Set your goal upstream and begin the journey—because "yes! you are visible and real!"

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