

Verbundkatalog Kalliope

Mann, Erika

o.O., 1958-09-13

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13. September 1958

Mr. John Farrar
Farrar, Straus and Cudahy Inc. Publishers
101 Fifth Avenue
New York 3, N.Y.

Dear John,-

I am not superstitious but certain letters have a way of announcing themselves in such a manner that one feels compelled to write to the sender regarding the matters at stake precisely one day before his letter arrives - and most probably, because in some un- or subconscious layer of the mind one is secretly aware of the fact that what one is asking for is about to be received. Thus, there must have been a certain connection between my writing to you yesterday and the reception of your letter today. Even so, please forgive me for having been - apparently, at least - impatient. It was just that I was really curious about the impression THE LAST YEAR made in the US - and also about the fate of my juveniles.

As for the latter, I can quite understand that Henry Z. Walck considers THE CHORISTERS' CAKE to be competitive, in as far as "the similarity" of settings and of incidental information would operate against my boy singers. On the other hand I do not quite see why DIE ZUGVOEGEL should be so difficult to translate. What Miss Jaeger calls "burschikos" would solely apply to the character of "Ralph", and he is a type of boy well known in all great cities, and if, in English, he should be speaking like a New York street urchin, no damage whatsoever could possibly be done. For the rest, my boy singers are anything but "burschikos": on the contrary - they have, most of them, and in particular the two heroes, "Till" and "Bastian" a definite leaning towards the romantic which doesn't seem all too far fetched considering the fact that they are dealing in and with music.

Well, let's hope, Dodd may prove to be more interested than was good old Walck!

On the whole I have been very pleased with the American Reviews of THE LAST YEAR. Knowing how much any hero-worshipping or whatever might be felt as such is despised in your fair country, it is most gratifying that the American press forgave me for not calling my father a pompous imposter. This is not meant to sound bitter or resentful. In certain ways, it is a very sound instinct on the part of the American critics not to permit anyone writer, director or what the case may be to be praised beyond all limits. But then, it had never been my intention "to praise" my late father at all.

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The book, as you, of course, know very well, is nothing but a simple and honest report of the last twelve months he spent with us. Only, it might have been misunderstood, and, as I said before, I am truly grateful that it wasn't.

Thanks again, dear John, for all you have done, and please ~~accept~~ with your family the expression of my wholehearted devotion.

Yours, as ever,

