

STAGE IN REVIEW:

Chilean Drama Presented Here

By JOHN ROSENFELD

The Theater Centers new play is *Let the Dogs Bark* and it comes from Santiago, Chile, with the assistance of the Rockefeller Foundation. The foundation also provided for an English translation by Lysander Kemp and it was directed here as in Chile by Pedro Morthieru.

The hands-down-the-hemisphere gesture is to transplant local color but also in terms to satisfy universal theatrical interest.

Let the Dogs Bark, the author of which is one Sergio Vodanovic, seems to fulfill these requirements. If not strikingly Chilean it is patently Latin-American. As drama it is as general as Ibsen. It has resemblances even dependencies on "An Enemy of the People" and Mr. Vodanovic resolves his problem in almost the words of the Norwegian. "There's nobody above us or below us," cries the harassed Esteban whereas Ibsen's Stockmann consoles the final curtain with "The strongest man in the world is the one who stands most alone."

"LET THE DOGS BARK" establishes a situation of South American political jobbery. Esteban is an honest minor figure in the sanitation department until the government demands that he padlock an opposition newspaper, physically as clean as a hospital falsely alleging bad ventilation.

Esteban is thrown for a loss by his conscience. He yields for the wife and son he says, and rather accepts the maxim, "The boss

'Let the Dogs Bark'

THEATER CENTER: A play in two acts by Sergio Vodanovic. Translated by Lysander Kemp. Staged by Pedro Morthieru; assistant, Drexel H. Riley. Production designed by Fernando Colina. Nov. 10, 1961. The cast:
Esteban Ronald Wilcox
Octavio Gene Lindsey
Carmen Mary Bozeman Raines
Minister Edwin McClure
Cornejo Ryland Merkey

who doesn't abuse his authority loses it." Even the newspaper itself expects payola not punishment.

Esteban's bank account expands and his soul shrivels. His wife is unhappy. His son has abandoned the study of law and turned rakehell. Esteban's new status demands that he even pay his mistress some attention. Next he is drawn into a corrupt deal with his bad angel, a cabinet minister.

Eventually Esteban adjusts to a nobler set of values. He is determined to hold out against the system even if he has to go to jail for it.

This play, which apparently was burnished for the American stage in John Gassner's classes at Yale has the force of truth. Government can be graft-ridden and probably is. The pure idealist not only will get nowhere but may get himself into trouble. Esteban's first show of stubbornness brings on charges that he is defending the "yellow, pornographic press."

The second time he acts up, the cabinet charges him as the real author of their crimes.

NOR ARE THE elders encouraged by the young, who have even a less reliable set of values. As Octavio explains, when he quits law school and goes after money, "I'd rather pay a lawyer than be one."

There is also some theoretical and not too witty discussion over the sanctity of the law, the charter of absolute justice, but both younger and older generations don't really believe it in this nihilistic era.

Carmen, the mother, alone remains untarnished. Her husband ever reproaches her for lack of ambition. She speaks her piece in something that goes only with an honest peasant face but not with palace chic, "Our causes don't have to be great ones," she says "I want to knit you a sweater so that you won't be cold. That's my cause." We doubt that th

was "universal" with Theater Center regulars.

"LET THE DOGS BARK" is un-subtle, direct, rather unsophisticated and mainly humourless. We fear that some of the comedy does not come through the translation, because it does wink here and there in the background.

The performance was well with in the means of a 5-man cast under Mr Morthieru's direction. He, for one, was able to place

a consistent style on the Center's stage even if it is vintage.

Ronald Wilcox was a plausible, intense Esteban. Gene Lindsey was a convincing son and at a dramatically problematic time of life, too. Edwin McClure was a reasonable image of a slick Latin-American politico. Mary Bozeman Raines as the tearful mother and Ryland Merkey as Cornejo, the newspaper proprietor, were constant and, we fear, unimaginative factors.

ing room in several stages of affluences.

Pre-curtain speeches were made by Paul Baker, Mr. Morthieru, Juana de Laban, Mr. Colina and kinescope photographers who will show scenes of the playhouse and the production on South American television.

THERE WAS an excellent setting designed by Fernando Colina, showing a middle-class Chilean liv-

DYNAMIC!!

Let the dogs bark

DALLAS THEATER CENTER
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