

"INFORMACIONES" 7-6-61

"Deja que los Perros Ladren" of Sergio Vodanovic, presented by the Chilean Teatro de Ensayo at the "Español"

With plays of social content, it is necessary to separate values of local or occasional type from the general idea that gives life to them in the scene. If this does not occur, we run the risk that the attack to an immediate or determinate situation may replace in our minds the understanding of virtues of higher value. The plot of "Deja que los perros ladren", develops on a background corresponding evidently to a Chilean situation within Chilean politics, truly existing or created by the author. But underneath this - that is - underneath the natural aspect, there is a daring defense of honesty, idealism, faith in something more important than just success in making money. This is what makes this play ^{into} something important. In spite of apparent similitudes it cannot be confused with plays written fifty years ago. It is a modern play in its form, a form that I would dare to say is admirable for its conciseness, for the way it is developed, ^{and} clarity of its intentions. We are once more faced with a conflict in a family born of the irregular behaviour of a father, victim to a certain extent of the medium in which he moves. The honest employee is no longer honest. But his son will not be an exponent of those virtues that his father dreamt off for him. Words are not as impressive as living good example, and instead of assimilating advice, he assimilates facts. All this represents something more than a mere analysis of political circumstances, although this may have a first role in the development of the plot.

Sergio Vodanovic ^e defends decency. Perhaps his respect for law ^{is} too extreme. The problem is deeper. Law as all human works may be unjust or unfair and then it is our conscience that must decide, but in this particular instance, the protagonist is not an intellectual, he is a civil servant, with a rigid concept of duty, and he fails in this duty to scape unemployment and poverty. We see him successful until he repents ^t and goes back and is sincere in thought and deed.

A well controlled performance avoided the risk of action becoming melodramatic and gave accent to situations.

In the second act, just before the unravelling of the plot, when the author makes his youngest character present a wonderful monologue, with very intelligent response, which is a kind of X-ray of the "mal du siècle". Young people no longer have attractive careers for which to fight with heroism, no idealism for noble and unselfish action. They only want to live intensily, enjoy life. The author

center the attention in Chile, but it is probably true of other latitudes.

However, there is a positive reaction. We have lived through a collective wreck, the only one saved is the mother, who firmly and stubbornly holds to her conservative principles. A cynic newspaper man, a high official, a corrupt Minister, a student going adrift. They all turn round and finally produce a kind of assault against the barricades of scepticism and immorality. The author has faith in the future and did not want to bring down the curtain on a panorama of ruins but on a dawn full of hope.

Again the Teatro de Ensayo de la Universidad Católica de Chile has given evidence of its professional training. The cast that played the "Pergola de las Flores" presents now "Deja que los Perros Ladren" with characters quite different and they do it to perfection. The different situations could lead to uncontrolled action, but you never hear a loud cry, discreet acting gave this play its true significance. Mario Montilles, Hector Noguera, Silvia Piñeira, Mario Hugo Sepúlveda and Justo Ugarte are the five characters alive with sincerity.

Warm applause rewarded both author and cast and the curtain had to go up several times in honour of those that participate in this show of Chilean dramatic art, that is placing high the name of their country.