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ALAN PATON CENTRE UKZ-N-B

ANNIE LAURIE WILLIAMS, INC.

18 East 41st Street, New York 17, N. Y. Murray Hill 5-7565

ANNIE LAURIE WILLIAMS
PAMELA BARNES
LEONE GRAY

March 25, 1948

Dear Mr. Paton:

Thank you for your good letter. I am glad to tell you that Maxwell Anderson is willing to sign an agreement with you to write a play based on CRY THE BELOVED COUNTRY despite the fact that Sir Alexander Korda has an option to buy the motion picture rights of your book.

As you probably know, the usual procedure is for a play to be produced on Broadway before the motion picture rights of the book and play are sold. Mr. Anderson was so enthusiastic about your story that he is willing to go ahead and write the play knowing that London Films plans to produce the picture.

Mr. Korda understands that Mr. Anderson is signing a contract with you and that he does not acquire speaking stage rights to your book. Under the terms of the contract which you will sign with The London Films, you have a right to enter into a dramatization contract with Mr. Anderson. The motion picture contracts are being drawn in London, and when they are sent to me, I will forward them to you. It might be several weeks before you receive these papers, as I have asked to have certain clauses included in the contract and these clauses have to be sent over to London Films.

Mr. Meyer asked me to explain to you something about the working of the Dramatists Guild in relation to dramatization agreements between authors and dramatists and also about the Dramatic Production Contract which will be signed by the Dramatist and the producer when Mr. Anderson's play is completed.

There is an agreement which was negotiated by The Dramatists Guild of The Authors League of America, Inc., and the Theatrical Producing Managers called "The Minimum Basic Agreement." You will see this Minimum Basic Agreement referred to in the enclosed dramatization agreement between you and Maxwell Anderson and Kurt Weill. There is a minimum basic percentage which producers are allowed to pay on gross receipts of a musical or a play with music, and that is six percent. This six percent must be divided between the author of the basic material (in this case CRY THE BELOVED COUNTRY), the Dramatist and the Composer. If they call in an arranger, they must have a small percent to pay him. Under the terms of the contract you will see that your percent of the gross receipts of the play are to be one and one half percent. The normal gross of a musical should give you a weekly payment of around four hundred dollars a week. Of course, if the play is a big success, you should make as much as six or seven hundred dollars a week.



If Mr. Korda does not exercise his option, then the motion picture rights of the play will come into being. In such case you understand that the producer of the play will share in the monies received from the sale of the motion picture rights of the play if he keeps the play running on Broadway for at least three weeks. His percentage is always the amount agreed upon in the Minimum Basic Agreement which is forty percent. That leaves sixty percent to be divided between Mr. Anderson, Mr. Weill and you in accordance with the terms agreed upon in the dramatization agreement.

If Mr. Korda does take up his option, of course he will own the worldwide motion picture rights to your book. He cannot use Mr. Anderson's play or Mr. Weill's music without making some arrangement with them to buy these rights. But they cannot sell the motion picture rights of their play to anyone but Mr. Korda, as no other producer would be interested in the motion picture rights of the play unless he could also buy the picture rights of your book.

As you are required to join the Dramatists Guild before the dramatization agreements can be filed with the Guild or the production contracts can be signed, I am enclosing ~~you~~ an application for associate membership in the Guild. I am sending two copies of this application blank. Will you please fill out and sign both copies and return to me when you sign and return the dramatization agreements. You need not send the Guild the sixteen dollars membership fee, as we can deduct this amount from the monies due you.

Will you please initial each page of the Dramatization Agreement and sign and return all three copies to me. After all parties have signed the agreements I will send you a copy. We would appreciate if you would cable either Scribners or me when you have signed and put the contracts in the mail, as we would like to release a story to the newspapers about the Anderson play and the Korda film deal.

I hope I have not burdened you with too much work to do.

Mr. Meyer has read and approved the enclosed contract and will write you tomorrow. I want to get this letter out on tonight's airmail. I am sending along a letter which Mr. Anderson wrote to you and asked to have accompany the contracts.

We are all so happy about the good news that CRY THE BELOVED COUNTRY is climbing up on the best seller lists.

Sincerely yours,

Mr. Alan Paton,
P.O. Box 1567,
Johannesburg, South Africa.

Annie Laurie Williams