

2011/05/16

Replied by David
from Nyakopi at
16/3/64

March 9, 1964



Dear Mr. Paton:

More from Krishna:

"I haven't written to you in the last two or three days so here is a summary. Yesterday we had a runthrough. It ran 66 minutes but you know we will tighten it up to about 52 minutes....."

Michael Goodliffe is just marvellous. He understands all the Alan Paton gags and he really brings it to life. I am so happy I have him and not Alec Clunes or Pieter because he understands the part, he has humility and he gets along with the cast beautifully. There's gravity on his face...he has grown in the last 10 years. He practically worships you - I know you will be embarrassed!

We have a problem in I, 3: Walter cleaning the office and the Principal talking about Ha'Penny - somehow it looks contrived, like an old-fashioned melodrama. Today I hit on a solution. When Walter says: "Can I go on with the cleaning" he goes under the dias, so Mr. Mabaso and the Principal can talk without knowing that Walter is still in the office. When Mr. Mabaso finishes his speech on "inferior to white people" some kind of an accidental noise is heard...the Principal stops and crosses towards the dias. He calls "Walter". Walter comes out. The Principal, just to check whether Walter has heard the Ha'Penny story speaks the following lines to Mr. Mabaso: "Tell me the children's names", and he smiles "It was Dickie after all". Walter keeps a poker face. Then Walter goes to fetch Ha'Penny. Principal looks after Walter. What do you think of this?

Last night I touched the rape scene. I had to take out that line: "What do you want, Sponono". It came out to heavy because if Elizabeth is brave and courageous she would not ask such a question. I thought about adding those two lines: "Every person must ~~XXXX~~ have someone who believes in him", because Sponono's transition was too sudden. I have devised some business where Sponono and Elizabeth turn to the upstage side of the bed so we leave it to the audience's imagination. Somehow it takes the embarrassment away.

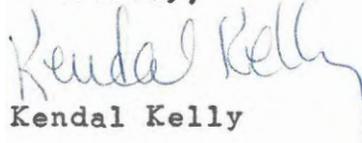
One more change: About the Charlie business, about Walter's homosexuality. If Walter says "Charlie had no people, nothing, we took him in", this is a very uncertain and involves George as a homosexual and implicates Spike's murder.

So we have changed it to: "Because he took your small boy, Charlie, away" and Walter says: "Charlie had no people, nothing, I took him in". It is very convincing this way but I would like to know what you think of it.

Technically I am scared and nervous. I have such a short time left in rehearsal. We are ~~opening~~ opening for previews in about ten days...we miss you and the cast sends their love to you."

Enclosed is the herald we just had printed up.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Kendal Kelly". The signature is written in a cursive style with a long, sweeping tail on the final letter.

Kendal Kelly

Mr. Alan Paton
23 Lynton Road
Kloof,
Natal, South Africa