

6-29-1976

'Candide' - Subtlety Lacking in Adaptation

Walter Lazenby

Follow this and additional works at: http://thekeep.eiu.edu/lazenby_reviews

Recommended Citation

Lazenby, Walter, "'Candide' - Subtlety Lacking in Adaptation" (1976). *Walter Lazenby Reviews*. 12.
http://thekeep.eiu.edu/lazenby_reviews/12

This Article is brought to you for free and open access by the Theatre Arts at The Keep. It has been accepted for inclusion in Walter Lazenby Reviews by an authorized administrator of The Keep. For more information, please contact tabruns@eiu.edu.

Tuesday 29 June 1976

'Candide'—Subtlety Lacking in Adaptation

By WALTER LAZENBY

CHARLESTON -- Distinguished though the musical "Candide" is, owing its origin to Voltaire's immortal philosophical tale and featuring Leonard Bernstein's music, with lyrics mostly by poet Richard Wilbur, I suppose I was bound to be somewhat disappointed in it. It is impossible not to compare it with its source and see that in Hugh Wheeler's adaptation much

subtlety is lost.

That loss is common enough, of course, in adaptations. Stuffy comparisons aside, the dramatic version does make its case, though sketchily, against simple-minded acceptance of every event as being "for the best -- in this best of all possible world."

It traces some of the numerous adventures and unbelievably varied misfortunes of the naive hero Candide, who persists almost to the

end in the philosophy preached by his optimistic tutor, Dr. Pangloss.

A Review

The music is almost operatic in its sophistication, certainly challenging to the singers but also not particularly hum-

mable. None of the songs have become particularly popular.

"Candide" opens the summer season for Eastern's Theatre Department, with two performances yet to be given this holiday weekend. It is the first musical to be attempted in the Playroom and it works well in such intimate surroundings. In fact the staging has a charm all its own, action taking place in the center and in the four corners of the room on circus-like circular platforms, with

ramps connecting. The synthesized music sounds almost like calliope music muted.

It is a personable company which energetically romps through the show's antics. Practically everybody plays several roles.

As Candide, Terry Kelly looks appropriately cherub-like and sounds good, but I longed to see Robert Biggs (Maximillian), with his expressive features and greater ease of movement, have a go at

acting the role.

Deborah Timblin is at her most effective in singing "Glitter and Be Gay," but she and Kelly have other impressive moments together.

I felt that Michael Boyll's portrayal of Voltaire ought to be sharply contrasted with his portrayal of Pangloss, to bring out the philosophical opposition of author and straw man-opponent; but then he has to characterize three other figures as well.