

**The Land is Bright: A Special Report to the National Arts Foundation on the State of the Arts in Rhodesia 1973, with Some Proposals for Their 1974, 159pp., Rh\$1,75.**

**The Story of Reps: The History of Salisbury Repertory Players By R. Cary Salisbury, Galaxie Press, 1975, 240pp., Rh\$5,50.**

These two books ostensibly share little in the way of subject matter, as Jackson's is a report on the contemporary scene and Cary's is a history of one organisation; but they are in a sense complementary, for Jackson's survey gives a context of activity in the arts in which the detailed account of the genesis and development of Rhodesia's foremost dramatic society offered by Cary may be more fully appreciated.

As Jackson acknowledges in his Introduction, his survey commissioned by the National Arts Foundation of Rhodesia, 'has had to be carried out, assessed, programmed and costed in about five months'. For a work that is so far-reaching in its coverage and executed at such speed, *The Land is Bright* is a remarkable achievement; its defects are largely those of haste. Jackson begins with a comparative study of aid for the arts in Canada, Australia, New Zealand, and the Republic of South Africa. Then under the successive headings of Art, Ballet, Arts Councils, Music in Education, Theatre, Theatre in Education, Literature, Poetry, and Festivals he describes and evaluates the activities of no less than 48 societies, institutions, and promotional organisations. Thereafter he assesses the contribution to the arts of 13 Municipalities and 3 major public bodies. A brief chapter on 'Housing for the Arts' is given to the physical requirements of the arts for the present and in terms of future expansion. Jackson concludes with a 'Summary of Proposals', 29 in all. There is an Appendix which gives the names and addresses of organisations connected with the arts.

As its title indicates, *The Land is Bright* offers a cheerful and encouraging picture of cultural activity in a country struggling against considerable odds: likewise, its prognostications are, in the main, optimistic. Much of the book manifests Jackson's firm grasp of fact and clarity of insight. However, it is unfortunate that his few asperic moments are also his least informed; these occur chiefly where he arms the sling of the David of Bulawayo against the Goliath of Salisbury and where he attacks those large institutions which he terms 'Titans'. He reveals the fabled British sympathy for the underdog, a trait which, though admirable on the field of battle, has little justification in a work of this nature. Nevertheless, his adverse criticisms are not entirely without foundation; one could only wish that they were more evenly distributed. *The Land is Bright* is much more readable than one might expect a survey of this kind to be and will form a useful basis for future researchers into the arts in this country.

In *The Story of Reps*, Cary recounts the history of the Salisbury Repertory Players from the foundation of the society in 1931 up to 1975. He begins with some pre-history; Chapter I offers a racy and thoroughly entertaining account of social life in Salisbury before there was a Reps. Witty, anecdotal, and often seemingly irrelevant, this chapter epitomises Cary's approach: one is reminded of those prose writers of the Renaissance who would unashamedly digress in the interest of a good story and who are today the more readable for it. However, the irrelevancies in Cary's book are apparent rather than real: for example, his quotation from an advertisement inserted in *The Rhodesia Herald* of January 1931 by a prominent motor company ('Our service is

100% European labour. No natives employed or allowed in the workshop.') prepares one for a later chapter describing the mentality with which Reps was later to grapple in the society's battle with the authorities over attendance by Africans and, ultimately, over African membership.

*The Story of Reps* is largely a story of personalities. This is fitting because Reps has been moulded by the influence of a few dominant individuals. The Story proper begins in Chapter II with the youthful zest of Christine Collings, to whom the book is dedicated, the young Rhodesian who returned from her studies in England with a headful of ideas; the life which she and her immediate associates, Dr Paul Anning and Joan Rankin, infused into the nascent theatrical world of Salisbury is projected forcefully and movingly by Cary. Later chapters recount the financial tribulations of Reps until comparatively recent times, the growth of the society and the critical, even agonizing, decisions on matters of policy which accompanied changes in the character of Salisbury. Many of the productions over the years are succinctly evaluated, often with a spicy (but never uncharitable) account of intrigue behind the scenes. One of the most serious points reiterated through the book is the constant intention of Reps, from its inception, to fill the need in Salisbury for drama that is more than frivolous entertainment; Cary protests — too much, some might think — that the sneer of 'box office' success cannot be levelled at Reps. Among the personalities who dominate the pages of the book in turn are George Barnes, Dr John Keeling, and the society's professional Director Adrian Stanley. They are drawn with sureness of touch by Cary, who is himself a founder member of Reps, as well as an experienced author.

If Cary's special qualification for writing this book, his intimate association with Reps, is his strength, it is also his weakness. There are moments when he expends more energy than is due to minor events and petty crises which are simply boring to anyone who was not involved in them. But these are infrequent blemishes on a book that must be read by anyone who is genuinely interested in the history of theatre in this country.

Cary and the publishers must be congratulated jointly on the excellent appearance of the book, which is set in clear and attractive type, and for the profusion of well-chosen photographs, which are excellently reproduced.

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**A Service to the Sick: A History of the Health Services for Africans in Southern Rhodesia (1890-1953)** *By M. Gelfand.* Gwelo, Mambo Press, 1976. 187pp., 44 Photographs, Rh\$6,50.

This book, the first of a new series entitled 'Zambeziiana', has been written by the Professor of Medicine in the University of Rhodesia. This series, under the General Editorship of Professor R. S. Roberts, Professor of History at the University of Rhodesia, aims to 'focus on various aspects of culture and of development of society in Central Africa'. The author is already well known in the field of medicine in Southern Africa and has also published many works concerning historical aspects of medical practice.

The book, published in both soft and hard covers, describes the development of the health services in Southern Rhodesia from 1890 onwards in 17 chapters. There is a masterly foreword by Dr Dyson M. Blair, the last Federal