

Dear Sir,

I read your reviewer's comments on Paul Scofield with great applause and he/she could have added all his superlative reading for the radio. But I do wonder if the reviewer had seen any other work by Peter Brook other than that not very good film. If we are to judge theatre directors by the films they make who shall scape hanging? Certainly not Peter Hall or Trevor Nunn. After all Brook did direct those performances of Scofield that gave the reviewer so much pleasure. Ronald Gray's article did not cover the second half of Brook's career when he arguably did his best work. So did the reviewer see the *Mahabarata* or not for example? Or *The Man Who*? If not I do think a director's work does need to be seen as a whole before judgement—particularly before Divine Judgement!

In conclusion I hope the commentary column does well and I think it will—after all it has got me out of my seat and over to the laptop.

Best wishes

Roger Calvert

Dear Sir,

May I recommend a late performance of his that you probably do not know (as I don't suppose you follow mainstream American cinema very diligently)? In a film directed by Robert Redford called *Quiz Show* he plays Mark van Doren. The protagonist is van Doren's son, Charles, then a promising young academic born into America's intellectual aristocracy, but also a strikingly good-looking WASP. He is recruited as a contestant in a TV quiz show, and when the studio bosses find that he's good for the ratings, they start to feed him the answers to guarantee his continuing presence in the show. When the scandal breaks he is disgraced and his academic future in tatters.

It's interesting enough in itself, but Scofield makes something unforgettable out of his scenes. At first he is puzzled and rather embarrassed at his son's taking part in something so low as a TV show, but he is also ironically amused and detached when he mentions it to others, and also secretly pleased and proud that his son has become a national figure of sorts. The last scene between them, when the truth is out, is very moving, van Doren père disbelieving and shattered that his son could have sold his reputation for something so paltry. There is all the vanity and pain of fatherhood in P.S.'s performance.

best wishes

Richard Bates

This was not intended for publication and when the editor asked whether it could go on the website Mr Bates replied:

Well, if you think it's worth it, then do. The film was a particular pleasure to me as I had always disliked M van D for misleading several generations about Dryden. I was glad to be able to put a properly human face and human feelings on the figure who had been one of my mental punching bags for years.

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