

10 Lowndes Street,

S.W.1.

29th June, 1963.

Dear Mr. Lewis,



As you will see from the attached papers, we admire the stand you took on Saturday night when you got out of your car to challenge the aggressive Mr. Holmes, and we should like to help you.

You invited this Cyril Holmes to come and see you in your dressing room on Monday evening at 7.30. He may not have the courage to appear, but re-inforced by the friends he demanded permission to bring with him, we believe he will.

In case he does come we have brought you the attached information which will show you that it was not because there was something wrong with your Act on Monday (even anti-Martin and Lewisites enjoyed it!) The boeing was not for you personally, but all part of a long-standing, spiteful campaign by an ill-mannered minority.

If we may come in to this meeting as well as Mr. Holmes & Co., we have sufficient information about his behaviour on a previous occasion to help you deflate him and to show everyone that his over-vocal criticism is not for you alone, but part of his general campaign.

While you were speaking to him on Saturday evening I had the chance to talk to your wife and to assure her that this boeing was not for your Act but just from an ignorant few. I hope she told you.

May we please come to this "discussion" to help you get fair play?

Every good wish to you and Dean,

from

Sue & Targot Whitworth

STATEMENT

This statement is offered without bias, as I am by no means a 'regular' at the Palladium, and since Danny Kaye's season in 1951, I have only visited the theatre on about two occasions.

The main reason I attended the Martin - Lewis first night was to see if they would make the mistake of including 'Ballin' the Jack' (which Dean Martin sang in "That's my Boy") at a theatre where it belongs exclusively to Mr. Kaye.

On arrival, therefore, I was feeling anti Martin and Lewis - never having cared for their style of comedy on the screen. So it is a tribute to their artistry that I thoroughly enjoyed 80% of the show, and had not laughed so heartily for a long time.

Disliking injustice, I was amazed at the disproportionate space given to the booing in the Press reviews the next day. It was obviously the action of a prejudiced few, and as such, should never have been assessed with such damaging emphasis.

For too long now, an ill-mannered minority has been allowed an influence on theatre first nights which their biased judgment in no way merits - and I feel that those

who love the Theatre should stand firm before it is too late, to show these people up in their true, and rather ridiculous light.

Mr. Lewis's courage in getting out of his car on Saturday night to answer jeers from an onlooker was a definite step in the right direction. With courtesy and consideration he discussed points with his detractor - who hardly deserved such broadminded treatment - and it was then that I discovered for the first time that the instigator of the scene on Monday was none other than CYRIL HOLMES, a man about whom I had occasion to warn the Palladium attendants as long ago as May, 1951.

He and his friends appear to pride themselves that they can break an act or show if they so wish - and this seems to give them a feeling of superiority and power. My particular clash with them came over Danny Kaye - but there have been many cases since then, notably, the recent boeing of Miss Vivian Blaine in "Guys and Dolls".

It therefore seems obvious that the unpleasantness at the Palladium last Monday was not true criticism of Martin and Lewis, but just a further example of the petty tactics of this little group.

Who is Mr. Holmes to set himself up as an arbiter of London theatrical tastes? So far as I am aware, he is not employed as a dramatic critic on any of our leading journals. He is entitled to his personal opinion - in private - but he should have the good manners not to inflict it on other members of the audience who are enjoying their evening.

Margot Shuter

SIGNED:

29th June, 1953.

Notes on CYRIL HOLMES activities against the
DANNY KAYE Season, 1951.

Remarkably, there is one act known to have appealed to Mr. Holmes - and this was Judy Garland. It was on her last night that he began his unpleasant treatment of Danny Kaye - for no other reason than his act happened to be the one scheduled to follow. When Judy introduced Danny from his box, Cyril Holmes was heard to shout: "Why not stay longer? There's no one any good coming next week!" He would also wait outside the Savoy to jeer as Danny went in and out.

Rumours of this reached me when queuing on the Sunday afternoon for First Night standing tickets. Several people said that Holmes had openly boasted to them that he was out to ruin Danny's show on the opening night. When he passed the queue again later, I tackled him about this, and he also met Mrs. Jefferies, who at once reported his intentions to the attendants. I found out the number of his seat for the 2nd House on Monday - but unfortunately some friends of his were also to be there, and as they were standing, there was no way of finding out in advance where they would be.

I did, however, manage to locate them on the actual night, and positioned myself alongside.



They took no notice of the Acts in the first half, but spent the time discussing Cyril, and saying they would "soon make Danny get a return ticket to Brooklyn". This type of remark made their 2nd Half intentions only too clear.

During the Interval, I was able to point them out unobtrusively to an attendant, so he and I were both ready to stamp out the slightest sign of trouble. The amazing thing - and it is a tremendous tribute to Danny himself - is that we didn't have to. After about five minutes stony silence, the two men, who had definitely come with the intention of spoiling the show began to laugh and clap - and found themselves revelling in it all as much as anyone else in the audience.

So for once a 'boeing spree' of Mr. Holmes and party met the end it deserved!

IMPORTANT NOTE:

We decided at the last moment to remove this page from the Statement before handing it in, as if Cyril Holmes had seen it, it would have left the way open for him to say: "There! You see we only boo if the Act is not good. Danny Kaye 'made the grade' - Martin and Lewis did not".